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HARRY FITZROY.



Up came Beetles, like a woolsack, until he hung over the deck.

HARRY FITZROY.

CHAPTER I.

THOSE BLESSED IRONCLADS.

CAPTAIN TIMBER, of Her Majesty's Service, and now in the fifteenth year of his half-pay existence, sat in his little house at Peckham-rye, reading the morning paper, and Captain Timber was in a very bad frame of mind indeed.

His eye—a fiery one in his youth, still bright enough to show that the old spirit yet burned within him—glared at the paper as he read, and his nose, fiery also—the result of old age, an idle existence, and may be a glass of grog occasionally—rose higher and higher, until the back of his head touched his chair, and then with an oath he dashed down the paper and got upon his feet.

"Those blessed ironclads," he growled, "are the ruin of the country! Ironclads!—iron boilers, bust 'em! Man-traps—cast-iron prisons—floating foundries—anything but ships, sailors, or blue-jackets. Pah! they're all stokers and firemen now, and when they come ashore they get themselves up in the old styles, and impose upon the public. Beetles!"

The last word was roared out at the top of his voice as he resumed his chair, and a voice from somewhere outside replied:

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Beetles," cried the captain, "come here."

A curious stamping and scraping sound was heard, and some heavy body came bang against the door. The captain got up, turned the handle, and admitted one of the strangest beings ever looked on by mortal eyes.

A blue-jacket of the old school unmistakably, and a man as far as head and body went, but he had neither legs nor arms—in the place of the former he had a pair of ordinary wooden legs, and two iron crooks fitted upon the stumps did duty for the latter. A pair of crutches, which, with the aid of the iron crooks, he managed admirably, assisted his progression.

"Beetles," said Captain Timber, "sit down."

"Ay—ay, sir!" said Beetles, and, taking the bearings of the nearest chair, he tossed up his crutches and essayed to sit down. A little mistake, however, brought him to grief; the chair was several inches further off than he expected, and that part of his frame intended to sit upon caught the edge, and drove the chair away. Beetles came down with a crash that shook the house, and made the breakfast things leap upon the tray.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he said, apparently unhurt by the mishap; "that's the second time I've done that this morning. I did it in the kitchen, and I think I've killed the cat—Mrs. Brown took her out in an insensible condition."

"You should take your bearings better, Beetles," said Captain Timber.

"It's my eyesight, sir," replied Beetles, coolly fixing one of his hooks upon the mantelpiece and dexterously dragging himself upon his wooden feet. "Once over the line, cap'n, I can't recover with these two stiff 'uns," indicating his legs. "But what do you want, sir?"

"Sit down, Beetles."

"Thankee, cap'n; if it's all the same to you, I'd rather stand."

"Beetles," said Captain Timber, taking up the paper, "they've launched another."

Beetles started and nearly fell, but with a movement of his right crutch he knocked over a chair, hit the captain over the shins, and saved himself.

"Another!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, another," repeated the captain.

"What! in spite o' that letter o' yours to the h'admiralty?"

"I never even got an answer, Beetles."

The face of Beetles became clothed with blank despair. He looked at the ceiling, at the floor, at the breakfast things—anywhere but at the captain.

"They are all mad, sir," he said, and sighed forth a spirituous odor.

"Beetles," said Captain Timber, suddenly becoming stern, "that fall wasn't your eyesight."

"Wot was it, then?" said Beetles, doggedly.

"Rum!" said the captain. "RUM—RUM!"

Beetles became statue-like—he scarcely seemed to breathe.

"You hear?" said the captain. "Rum!"

"Ay—ay, sir!" replied Beetles. "I never could abear the smell on it, and the odor of this ere room is awful."

Captain Timber was going to reply to this when his eye fell upon an accusing bottle on the breakfast tray.

He caved in.

"Beetles," he said, changing the subject at once, "listen to this: 'Launch of the ironclad, Turnover.'"

"Don't read no more, sir," said Beetles, "I can't abear it."

"But what is to be done, Beetles? It must be stopped."

"Write to the h'admiralty."

"No use."

"Go and talk to 'em, then."

"They won't hear me, Beetles."

"Then holler on the doorstep until you get a mob around. Then give out your opinion public."

"I don't think that will do," said the captain, sadly shaking his head, "for the public is prejudiced. The country will be ruined in a year or two."

"Bust up!"

"Just so, Beetles. And then where will my half-pay and your pension be?"

Beetles gave another start, and bent towards the fire-place. He fixed a hook in the captain's waistcoat, and righted himself. When in peril, Beetles accepted the first means of safety which offered itself. Apparently Captain Timber had been of service before, as his waistcoat had three holes through it, and there was a mighty rent in the collar of his coat. At any rate, he accepted the act of Beetles as a matter of course.

"Lose our pensions, sir; wot shall we do, then?"

"Starve, Beetles."

"Look'ee here, sir," cried Beetles, waving a crutch and knocking over the teapot, "that iron biler game must be stopped."

"It must, Beetles."

"It shall!"

"But how, Beetles?"

"I ain't ready with a notion at this moment, but it must be done."

"Go and think it over, Beetles."

"I will, sir. Open the door."

The captain opened it, and Beetles stumped out of the apartment, down the passage to the kitchen, and in a few minutes the sound of a heavy fall proclaimed that for the third time that morning he had failed to take the correct bearings of a chair.

"Beetles is right now," murmured Captain Timber. "About the third fall generally clears his head. He'll come out with a notion now, I'll bet."

CHAPTER II.

GOOD NEWS.

CAPTAIN TIMBER filled his pipe, and took a seat at the window to meditate. Not that he hoped that anything would come of his meditations, for he knew and admitted that he was a slow thinker. He meditated because it was in harmony with tobacco. He had little faith in himself, but he believed in Beetles.

"He's a wonderful man," he mused, "to lose all his limbs and keep his brains. Beetles ain't educated, he ain't full of manners and politeness. but he's got talent. He a genius."

The housekeeper, a spare woman with an acidulated countenance, came to remove the breakfast things. The captain addressed her.

"Where's Beetles?" he asked.

"Before the kitchen fire," was the reply; "and I won't stand it, and so I give you warning, Captain Timber, which, saving your presence, sir, you are a fool to put up with a creature like that, and allow your really devoted servants' lives to be made burdens of."

"Is he thinking?" asked the captain, quite used to compliments about Beetles.

"Thinking!" replied the housekeeper, with

supreme contempt. "If smoking, drinking, and staring at the fire like an owl, is thinking, he's hard at it."

"He'll work it out," murmured the captain, rubbing his hands gleefully. "Isn't that a knock at the front door?"

"Who said it wasn't?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"See who it is, Mrs. Brown."

"See yourself, or send Beetles. I'm not going to be crushed no longer."

"Curse the woman!" muttered the captain, and, putting down his pipe, he went to the door. A tall, spare man, dressed in black, holding a blue bag in his hands, was on the step.

"Does Captain Timber live here?" he asked.

"I'm the party."

"May I say a few words with you?"

"Come in," said the captain.

"Messenger from the admiralty," he muttered, as he showed the guest into the parlor. "I've bust the iron bilers. Pray take a seat, sir."

The stranger bowed, took off a pair of black kid gloves, folded them up carefully, put them in his pocket, and sat down.

"My name," he said, "is Grubber."

"Dear me," replied the captain, hardly knowing what to say; "is it?"

"Grubber—Samuel Grubber, of the firm of Grubber and Corker."

"Indeed!" said the captain. "Glad to hear it, sir."

Mr. Samuel Grubber put down his hat, opened his bag, and brought out a lot of papers and parchments. Captain Timber eyed this proceeding with much curiosity, but failed to detect any signs of his own correspondence with the admiralty.

After a little careful arranging and sorting, Mr. Grubber took out a spectacle case, opened it, put on a pair of horn spectacles, and carefully looked at the captain.

"Your name," he said, "is Timber?"

"Yes, it is."

"Roger Timber?"

A very bad word arose to the captain's lips. This sort of examination was very irritating, but he checked himself, and said:

"Yes, my name is Roger; chrisen so—"

"You had a cousin named Scareaway Timber?"

"I think I had, but I don't know much about him."

"You were boys together?"

"Well, what of that?"

Captain Timber was getting very savage. What was the fellow driving at?

"Were you boys together?" asked Samuel Grubber, as cool as a prosecuting attorney examining a witness.

"Yes, we was."

"And you fought frequently?"

The face of Captain Timber beamed.

Old memories were stirred within his warlike breast.

"We fowt," he said, "on a average, about twice a day, and in the long run, I fancy, I licked him."

"That cousin of yours went to India, I believe?" continued Mr. Grubber.

"He runned away in the night," continued Captain Timber, "and wrote months arterwards to say where he was."

"From India?"

"Yes."

"Then, let me tell you he has been there ever since," said Mr. Grubber, "and that he died five months ago."

"Poor Scarey," said the captain, wiping his eye; "he was a rip of a lad, but his heart was good. I'm sorry he is dead."

"He lived a hard life there," said Mr. Grubber, referring to one of the documents; "most of it in almost inaccessible parts, trading and fighting with the natives, and occasionally returning to Bombay to invest such capital as he made. His life, I say, was a hard one."

"A reg'lar stiff 'un," murmured Captain Timber.

"He was often wounded," pursued Mr. Grubber, "and once hanged and left for dead; but he survived, or I should not be here to tell the story this day."

"I'm very much obleeged to you," said Timber. "I'm glad to hear about Scareaway."

"But I have come to the end," said Mr. Grubber. "Through all, and above all, in sickness, sorrow, and aggravation—no, I mean tribulation—if that boy of mine doesn't write plainer I'll discharge him—sickness, sorrow, and tribulation, in the gaieties of life, in its moments of pencil—peril—confound that boy—in the moment of peril, in the brightness of day, in the darkness of night—he bore with him the sweet memory of the lickings you used to give him, and that supported him through all. These are his very words, which my rascally clerk, who has twelve shillings a week, hard cash, has so villainously copied."

"I was an uncommon hard hitter when a boy," said Captain Timber, reflectively, "so was Scarey. He once knocked me through a iron-monger's window, where there was about half a ton of cheap tacks, loose, for sale. I was like a boy with a rash for a week afterwards. I am glad that Scarey remembered me."

"He has remembered you," said Mr. Grubber, rising to give emphasis, "to the tune of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

"What?" cried Captain Timber, reeling back.

"He has left you that sum," said Mr. Grubber, "and every penny of it is lying in the Bank of England—"

"Beetles!" roared Captain Timber.

"Be calm, I beg of you, sir. Do not let the excitement naturally arising from the sudden fortune upset your hitherto well-balanced mind. The money—"

"Beetles!" yelled Captain Timber.

Mr. Grubber looked about the floor, and seeing none of those familiar insects present, thought that the captain was out of his senses. The odor of rum, which had so upset Beetles, favored the idea of delirium tremens.

"Be calm, sir," he implored.

"Beetles!" cried the captain for the third time, and the stump of the crutches followed.

"Have the kindness, sir, to open that door," said Timber.

Mr. Grubber obeyed, and was immediately overpowered by the spectacle of Beetles coming into the room, with a flushed face and a wild eye.

"Stand still, Beetles," cried the captain. "Bring yourself to a anchor."

Beetles up with his right crutch, and struck it against the wall. This brought him to an anchor.

"Tell him," said Captain Timber, wiping his heated brow.

"Captain Timber," said Mr. Grubber, "has come into one hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

"Oh, my nerves!" gasped Beetles.

The crutch against the wall slipped, the one on the ground slipped, and in a heap he fell upon Grubber, and the pair went to the floor.

"Murder!" gasped the lawyer.

"All right, sir," said Captain Timber, hauling up Beetles; "you are too sudden. You should have been more careful. Beetles ain't the man he was; either his sight or his nerves have gone wrong; the least thing doubles him up."

"I ain't got no nerves at all, sir," gasped Beetles. "Put me on a chair. A hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Oh, put me on a chair!"

The captain put him on one, and there he sat, with his two wooden legs sticking straight out, and his eyes staring at Grubber as if he had been an unearthly visitor.

"Is it all true?" he asked.

"It's true," replied Grubber.

"But what shall we do with it?" asked Captain Timber.

"Do with it? Spend it."

"How?"

"I've got it!" cried Beetles, excited beyond measure. "You can bust the iron bilers now."

"How? Speak Beetles."

"The government is selling off some old frigates."

"Yes, I know; but what's the good of them?"

"Buy one, sir."

"Buy one?"

"Yes, and anchor her off the coast, and take in pupils, and edicate them, and make them sailors."

"Good, Beetles! Hear him, Mr. Grubber; his genius is flowing."

"H'edicate them, I say," pursued Beetles, getting each moment more and more emphatic, "and when the nation sees the folly o' having turned all the blue-jackets into stokers and firemen, you'll be on the spot to give 'em some of the real old stuff again, and save the nation from ruin."

"Oh, Beetles!" gasped Captain Timber.

"You shall have the command," continued Beetles, "and I'll teach 'em navigation, and we'll have a chap to teach 'em such rubbish as reading and writing. Master, we'll do it."

"So we will, Beetles. Hear him, Mr. Grubber?"

"Yes, I hear him," replied Grubber, adding to himself: "Both are either drunk or mad, or both, but it's no business of mine."

"Now, master, out with the bottle and three glasses, and we'll drink the health of it. That's it; one for Mr. Stubber."

"Grubber," corrected that gentleman.

"Grubber, then, since you are so mighty darned particular," said Beetles. "Fill up the glasses, master, and we'll drink a toast. Now, then, down to the bottom—"

'THE SCHOOL ON THE SEA'

Hip—hip, hurrah! and a speedy busting to the bilers!"

They all drank the toast, and as Mr. Grubber was not allowed to indulge in a heeltap, such an unaccustomed potation got into his head. He grew merry, and spent the day with Captain Timber and Beetles, and when night came a cab took him home, in such a condition that it required the united efforts of Mrs. Grubber and the domestic to get him into bed.

CHAPTER III.

THE "HEART OF OAK."

CAPTAIN TIMBER had come into his property, and he bought an old three-decker with a part of it—a grand old ship, seaworthy and sound after forty years upon the deep. She was called the *Heart of Oak*, and her new owner resolved to retain her name.

The precise spot which the captain selected for her moorings, does not much matter. A too particular description is not desirable, as we have much to tell which might get us into trouble if we gave names correctly. Let us call the spot Downhead, near the town of Sportjaw, a well-known arsenal in the south of England. Government fixed the vessel for the gallant captain, merely demanding that he should burn certain lights by night to save his own craft and others from danger. Captain Timber undertook to do all that was required of him, and took possession.

He was in ecstasies. The *Heart of Oak* was a beauty, and had everything in good order; from main royal to keel, from spanker to flying jib, she was as sound as a bell. She had even her guns—guns of the old sort, honest thirty pounders and none of your brutes that shot away a ship-load of iron at a charge, and sent it, Heaven alone knows where. A ship, in short, fit for manly fighting—a ship that would have scorned to blaze away at an enemy a day and a half before he came in sight, as modern monster boilers do.

With the assistance of Mr. Grubber, the following advertisement was composed and inserted in the newspaper.

"TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS, AND THOSE WHO LOVE THE SEA.—A fine opportunity now offers for those who wish to acquire a knowledge of naval matters, after the good old school, in combination with the usual branches of education. The ship *Heart of Oak* has been engaged expressly for the purpose and is now lying off Downhead, securely anchored within two miles of the shore. Tutors and a competent Naval Instructor have been engaged. First Reading and Writing Master, Mr. David Jones. Head Naval Instructor, Mr. Beetles. Captain and General Supervisor, Captain Timber, R. N. All communications to be addressed to Captain Timber, Cork street, Peckham."

David Jones was brother to Mrs. Grubber, a gentleman who had made many dismal failures in life, and finally tried his hand at teaching others how to acquire a knowledge he himself did not quite possess. On land his success was, to put it mildly, limited, and so, at the instigation of his brother-in-law, he resolved to try his luck at sea.

"It's a mad scheme got up by two madmen," said Mr. Grubber; "it won't last six months, but you will get some fun out of it, David."

"If I do," said the tutor, with a shudder, "it will be the first time I ever got any fun out of the sea."

"You made some fun at Margate, at all events," said Grubber, grimly.

"Or you made it out of my misery," returned Jones.

So he was engaged, and as the advertisement took kindly, a great many letters poured in.

Some of the writers called upon Captain Timbers, and others he called upon himself. They liked his bluff, hearty way, the proofs of his position as a captain of the old school were indisputable, and the rest were taken for granted. The opening day was named, a list of promised pupils made out, and the captain went on board, leaving Mrs. Brown and Beetles to follow as soon as the house at Peckham could be closed.

It was a bright day, and the *Heart of Oak* lay at rest upon a gleaming sea. There was little in her to attract attention, for she had bare spars and only one flag—the Union Jack—flying. Captain Timber would have flown no end of bunting, but he had no crew to hoist it, and so was content with a solitary flag.

"But as soon as the lads are in training," he thought, "I'll have every day kept with honors that deserve to be so. The battle of the Nile, Trafalgar, the Queen's birthday, shall all have their share of bunting, as I'm a loyal man. Ah! here comes the first batch."

He was not on board alone, but he was the only person on deck. Half a dozen scullery-maids and general servants, which necessity demanded, were below, but they were not needed.

A boat approached and pulled up to the side of the grand old ship. Two sailors, three or four boys, and Beetles were the occupants. Beetles was ghastly white.

The sailors fastened the boat, ran up the gangway, and saluted.

"First load, sir; more ashore."

"Now then, tumble up," cried the captain, flushed and excited. "Up with you, Beetles."

Beetles murmured something, but what it was nobody could hear. His eyes were fixed, and his body was limp.

"He's got no limbs," said the captain. "Hoist him up."

One of the sailors got some hoisting tackle, and lowered the hook. Captain Timber bade Beetles fix it in his waistband.

Beetles groaned, and rolled his eyes. The boys in the boat were in an agony of laughter.

"Fix him up, my lads!" cried the captain.

It was done in a moment. The hook was inserted in the belt of the mariner.

"Hoist away!"

Up he came like a woolsock until he hung over the deck. Then the belt gave way, and he fell—spread out like a turtle.

"Hand up the crutches," said the captain.

They were passed up, and the captain put them ready for use.

"Now, Beetles," he said, "hook on, and put yourself straight."

Beetles neither moved nor spoke, unless a sort of gasping groan comes under the head of speaking.

"Turn him over," said Captain Timber.

The boys, who had come upon deck, performed this office, and a livid face—the nose excepted—was revealed. There was no mistaking what it meant.

"Confound it!" cried the captain, "if he ain't drunk! Here, you fellows, roll him into the scuppers, and go ashore for another lot. And you, lads, come this way. Beetles, I'll have a talk with you by-and-by about this."

"Nerves!" gasped Beetles.

The answer which the captain gave to this, we shall not record. He walked aft, followed by the boys, and took his seat upon a campstool.

"Now, my lad," he said to the first, "your name?"

"Harry Fitzroy."

"Fitzroy? Was your father an admiral?"

"He was, and is."

"Do you mean to say he's still alive?"

"This morning he was."

"Why, my lad, he's an old friend o' mine. Give us your fist. A lady—your mother, I presume—came about terms, or I would have looked your father up. Your name, my lad?"

"Gerard Warren."

"A likely lad," muttered the captain, eying him over. "A sailor, every inch of him. Yours?"

"Ned Bowling."

"Oh, that's your name?" said Timber. "Well, Ned, you've got a larkish eye, and I may as well warn you at once that I stand no larks. I'm one of the old school, and I'll have discipline; so look to it. I know how sailors were made in the olden time, and I'm going to try to make some now. I'll have order kept, mind that. Go below, and I'll come by-and-by to show you how to sling your hammocks. No chambermaids aboard here. Everybody his own bed-maker."

"How jolly!" was the exclamation of the boys as they hurried off."

All that day the pupils continued to arrive, and before the sun set quite sixty were on board. It would be useless to try to specify them at present. Those who assumed prominent positions will come forward in due time. They assembled in the gun-room by orders of the captain, and thither he presently came.

"My lads," he said, "welcome to the *Heart of Oak*."

"Hurrah!" they cried, and would have tossed their caps high up but for the ceiling being so low. Gun-rooms are not very lofty apartments.

"I've a few words to say," continued the captain, "and I hoped to have been backed up by them as will have the pleasure of giving you larning: but the tutors haven't arrived, and my naval instructor—blame him—is sound asleep in the scuppers; but I'll have it out with him by-and-by."

The captain paused, and diving into his coat pocket, produced a paper. Putting on his spectacles, he said:

"These are the articles which I've drawn up for the occasion, and I'll call your attention to them at once. I say, you, Ned Bowling, what are you making faces at me for?"

"I wasn't making faces at you, sir," replied Ned.

"Don't make 'em at anybody here, then," said the captain. "Now, attention there."

"Article the first—The school will be divided into messes of ten, and rations for ten will be served out every morning at eight o'clock (I give the reg'lar time now, my lads, but we'll go by bells presently), to be received by one chosen out of each mess. What's that row in the corner, there?"

"Somebody stuck a pin into me, sir," replied a squeaky voice.

"I'll have no pin-sticking," said Captain Timber, "or any squeaking when it is done. Attention there!"

"Article the second—All hands up at sunrise; exercises on upper deck; then breakfast; then general schooling till noon; then general seaman-ship; then dinner; then exercises on the upper deck; then more general school; then tea. Evening, navigation. Nine o'clock, lights out, and hammocks. What the deuce is going on in that corner?"

The little scuffling which had drawn the captain's attention suddenly ceased, and the old salt, after attentively regarding the boys generally over his spectacles, continued:

"Article the third—Nobody to leave the ship unless they gets special leave from the captain, or some party as is appointed to give it."

"Article the fourth—Breaches of discipline to be reported to the captain."

"Article the fifth—All offenders to be tried by court-martial."

"Now, my lads," said Captain Timber, closing his spectacles, you've got a pretty good notion of what sort of life you'll have to lead here. Those as thinks they would like it, had better come forrad and sign; those as don't fancy they would can turn tail, and run for the shore as soon as they like. I've only to add that all boys are to keep off the poop, as that's my ground. Any boy caught there by me will be dealt with according to court-martial. Now then, who signs, and who cuts?"

Harry Fitzroy came forward, and appended his name, and as he put the pen down he shook hands with the captain, and said:

"May I ask one question, sir?"

"Yes, my lad; but be smart."

"How shall we know our sleeping-rooms?"

"Everything is in 'em, and they are numbered off," replied the captain. "All you've got to do is to pick out nine youngsters as you would like to have, take possession of one of the rooms, and stick to it. I've had the cabin and ward-room cut about a bit to meet this arrangement, for I mean to have you all aft with me, or I know there'll be very little order. Now, make your choice; let 'em sign, and be off with you."

Harry fixed upon Gerard Warren and Ned Bowling at once, and then scanned the rest. They were a mixed lot, and the choice was no easy one.

"I had better take some boy likely to be bullied," he thought. "Come here."

He addressed the youth who had been squeaking in the corner, a ferret-faced youngster, with a shambling gait, who came forward with the hesitating air of one who was uncertain of his reception.

"Well, my lad," said the captain, "what's your name?"

"Jerry Snivel, sir, if you please."

"But I don't please. Do you think you'll ever make a sailor?"

"I hope so, sir."

"So will my grandfather's cat's kitten."

Jerry signed, and Harry selected others of whom more anon, and was about moving away when a tall, bulky lad elbowed his way to the front.

"Here," he said, "I'll be captain of the next room."

Harry stopped and looked at him with mistrust and loathing in his face. The other stared at him in return.

"What are you looking at?" he asked.

"At you, but why I cannot tell," replied Harry. "Have we met before?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then I must be mistaken."

"If you had, you need not look as if I were going to eat you."

"I do not think you will eat me this side of Christmas," returned Harry, quietly.

"Maybe I'll have a try," returned the other, and stepping up he signed his name:

"David Crusher."

"It must have been fancy," thought Harry. "I never heard the name before. Come, my lads, let us go and pick our room."

CHAPTER IV.

UNPROFITIOUS OPENING OF "THE SCHOOL ON THE SEA."

THE various mess-rooms and cabins aft the *Heart of Oak* had been skilfully altered into dormitories, and numbered, the chief cabin alone being reserved for the great head of this enterprise for bringing back the tars of old to England.

This apartment was snugly fitted up, and adorned with sufficient nautical instruments to sail around the world. Tobacco-jars, segar boxes, and a suspicious-looking case, which might have contained liquor, were stowed away quietly in the corner.

The captain had disposed of his boys. All had signed the articles without hesitation, and he felt that his great movement was afloat. He was more than satisfied with the day's work as far as the lads were concerned, but he was disgusted with Beetles.

The cabin he had devoted to himself being level with the upper deck, the naval instructor would have no difficulty in gaining access to it, and there was no excuse for any delay when the captain opened his door, and roared out:

"Beetles!"

What a voice he had. Deep as the loud-roaring ocean—as penetrating as the booming thunder.

Beetles must have heard it, but Beetles did not reply. Beetles was awake, for, as Captain Timber came by, he had seen him sitting in the scuppers, and had heard his voice as he said: "Good evening, cap'en," therefore he must have heard.

As a rule the captain called in his ordinary tone of voice. It was only when necessity demanded it that he gave his lungs full play. Necessity demanded it upon this occasion, and when he, for the second time, called "Beetles!" the *Heart of Oak* trembled, as the earth used to do at the voice of Jove.

"Ay—ay, sir!" replied Beetles, "comin'."

The crutches came stumping over the deck, through what was the deck cabin in olden days, into the captain's presence.

"Didn't you hear me, Beetles?"

"Yes, I did, and come," replied Beetles. "Here I am."

"But I hollered twice."

"More fool you when once would ha' done."

Captain Timber, waiving that point, proceeded to go into the subject which he had in his mind.

"Beetles," he said, "you came aboard drunk to-day."

"I wasn't drunk," answered Beetles, shortly.

"What were you, then?"

"Sea-sick."

Captain Timber was fairly taken aback by the audacity of this assertion. Beetles sea-sick! Why, the old villain had been born, cradled, and reared upon the ocean.

"Beetles," he said, "you are a liar! But avast. Don't say no more."

"I ain't a goin' to," replied Beetles.

"I've got the lads told off—they've all signed," continued Captain Timber, "and we are fairly afloat. You know the first rule on board a ship—obedience to orders—without that, the place is a cursed play-ground; so, I've told 'em that, and they understands me. There ain't a boy—"

A startling shout from below, followed by yelling and hurrahing, cut short his oratory, and

brought Beetles, whose nerves were, indeed, in a very bad way, to the floor.

"What's that?" growled the captain.

"Go and see," said Beetles. "I can't."

Timber bolted out, and in a few seconds the noise ceased; a banging of doors followed, and all was still.

"He's got his work cut out," muttered Beetles; "I'm jiggered if he ain't! Well, cap'en, did you catch 'em?"

"Not a bit of it!" replied the captain, as he came in. "But the passage was alive with 'em in their shirts. The moment I showed, they scuffled off like rabbits in a warren."

"Boys is heels," said Beetles, sententiously.

"This sort o' thing won't do; but I've settled 'em for the night. They—halloo! out again—where's a rope's end? I'll stop it this time."

He made a second excursion, and came back with no better success.

"Never got a-nigh one, Beetles," he said.

"Boys," said Beetles, "is willery-wisps."

"They'll be out again, Beetles."

"Bet a pint o' rum on it, and you'll win."

"I'll wait on 'em this time," said the captain, and stole softly forth.

He was not mistaken. A deadly feud was going on below, which two simple interruptions could not quell. It again broke forth. Beetles heard, and, in his excitement, spun around upon an axis. Again the rioting stopped, and a fearful shriek followed.

"He's got one!" cried Beetles, and the captain returned with a beaming face.

"Landed just as he was a-flying through the door, Beetles," he said. "If I see a lame boy tomorrow, I'll put a mark against his name. But, Beetles, this won't do—this ain't discipline?"

"Who said it was?" asked Beetles.

"What's to done? I don't want no interference from the outside, I want to work the thing myself. But I must have somebody to help me. You are out of it, and the ushers as are coming won't be much use."

"I've got it," cried Beetles, spinning around. "I've got it."

"Now, what is it?"

"Chops!" cried Beetles.

"Chops—what's the good of them?"

"Chops ain't them—it's a him. Chops is a member of the force—a retired member. But he's got his uniform still. And if we has 'im on board, he'll keep order."

"Was it that sneaking-looking bobby with the battered hat, that used to come and smoke with you at Peckham?"

"Yes, that's the man."

Captain Timber looked doubtful. He knew Chops, and knew very little good of him.

"I don't think, Beetles, he would do."

"Yes, trust him," said Beetles. "You give 'im a chance. He left the force across they wouldn't trust him, and were allus a watching him while in the execootion of his dooty. Try Chops, and you'll have order. There they are again."

"Go and stop 'em, Beetles."

"I can't—how am I to go down the companion?"

"And I've had enough of it. Lord, what a row! Who ever heard the like of it aboard ship?"

Presently there came a lull.

"That's right; they are tired out," said the captain. "Beetles, what do you think of our venture?"

"Wait till Chops comes, sir, and then I'll tell you," replied Beetles.

"Anyhow, they are quiet now—no, now they're singing."

Sixty youthful voices lifted up to the utterance of various ditties floated into the captain's cabin. If he had possessed half an ear for music the discordance would have driven him mad. That sort of fun went on some time, and then the fighting below was renewed.

At last he could stand it no longer.

"I'll murder the lot!" he muttered, and seizing his rope's end he dashed out and charged head first down the companion. There was a light in the passage—a lamp hanging from the ceiling—and by its uncertain glare he could see a host of young demons in their night apparel.

They saw him coming, and flew at his approach. One alone stood his ground, a tall boy in a limp attitude.

This was more than ordinary mortal could bear. It was enough to drive a disciplinarian mad. Captain Timber went at him like a raging bull.

He struck him a deadly blow—he fell without a groan—and at that instant the light went out. Captain Timber turned cold.

"I've murdered him!" he gasped. "Oh, here's an opening to the 'School on the Sea!'"

CHAPTER V.

THE DISPOSAL OF THE BODY.

THE deed was done. Captain Timber had killed a boy. He knew it, and the dread feelings which came over the murderer the moment after the commission of his crime came upon him. It was done in haste, it is true; but it was done—he had inaugurated his school by knocking an inoffensive boy on the head, and the shadowy outline of a scaffold arose before him.

"I say, my lad," he gasped, "don't come any gammon. I hit you hasty, and I hit you hard, but you can't be dead."

No answer; all still as the depth of a tropical forest at midday. The dew of agony ran down the face of the hapless Captain Timber.

It was a dreadful thing to be sitting there in the dark, with a corpse close by, and he felt that he could stay no longer. But in the excitement of the attack he had lost the bearings of the place, and it was necessary for him to feel his way out.

But suppose, while doing so, he should put his hand upon the corpse. The cold face of a dead boy.

"Oh, lor!" gasped the captain. "I wish I'd let 'em go on building bilers, and lived happy on my money, or on my pension. Dash Scary, why couldn't he leave his property to somebody else?"

Much as he dreaded coming in contact with his victim, he dreaded remaining there much more, and slowly and cautiously he began to feel his way. Fortune favored him, and he went straight to the staircase.

As soon as his hand felt the rail, he ran up stairs with the activity of one in mortal terror, and burst into the presence of Beetles, who was seated on a chair helping himself to some grog.

"Wot now?" asked Beetles. "I thought you'd settled 'em."

"I've settled one," groaned Timbers. "I've killed him."

"You don't mean it," returned Beetles, with more coolness than one might have expected.

"Yes, Beetles; and I'm as good as hanged. I hit out at him, Beetles, fetched him in a vital part, and he's a lying on his back below, dead as mutton. Oh, what is to be done, Beetles?"

A tap at the door made the captain stagger, and Beetles spun around like a teetotum.

"Who's that?" gasped the captain.

"I don't know," replied Beetles.

"Go and see, Beetles."

"See yourself. I can't open a door."

Captain Timber went to the door, and threw it boldly open.

Nobody there.

"Some o' their larks," he said, with a ghastly smile.

"Is it?" replied Beetles. "Well, I hope it is."

Another tap at the door, and Captain Timber, starting back, fell over Beetles.

"There it is again," he said.

"I hears it," replied Beetles, "and I knows wot it is."

"What is it, Beetles?"

"It is the ghost o' that ere boy axing to be buried. When my father's brother was drowned he hammered at the door like winking until they went out, and dragged for the body. You must bury that boy."

"Bury him where?"

"Put a couple o' shot to his feet, and shove him overboard," replied Beetles. "He won't trouble you nor anybody else much more."

"But his friends will want to know what's become of him?"

"No they won't!" said Beetles, emphatically. "They'll be glad to get rid of him. Nobody ever grieved over a boy yet—there's lots on 'em, and every one is a darned nuisance. Besides, if they pushes the question, say he tumbled overboard."

Captain Timber reflected. Life was dear to him, and he wanted to save it. He did not intend to kill the boy, and it would be very hard if he had to hang for an unintentional crime. Nay, more, it would not be just, and as for concealment in the matter, that was no crime. Open confession would not bring back the boy to life. No—better take the advice of Beetles, and throw the dead lad overboard.

"Beetles," he said, "I will do it. But you won't betray me?"

"No—no," replied Beetles; "not if you chuck-

ed every boy as ever was growed into the sea. Boys are a regular nuisance."

"I'll light a lantern," said the captain, "and do it right away."

"That's right, master."

He was very slow about it, for it was not a pleasant task; but having taken a nerver in the shape of half a tumbler of rum, he lighted a lantern, and sallied forth.

It was a dreadful moment. He had never experienced anything like it before. He reached the head of the stairs, and peered down.

All was still.

"The others is asleep," he muttered. "Now, then, a boy isn't heavy. I can tuck him under my arm and run for it."

Tuck him under his arm! A dead, cold boy under his arm—awful thought!

Step by step he descended, and at length reached the passage at the bottom. One moment's pause, and with a great effort he raised the lantern, and looked about for the corpse.

It was not there, but—

Close to his feet was a sheet, a boy's cap and a mopstick. What were they doing there? Had the dead lad—

"I've got it!" he cried, as the truth sprang up before him. "I've been done! I've been gammoned! The captain of the ship have been took in! There's no discipline when the captain's took in, and I'll have the lot up for disobedience. Here, come out, some of you."

Of course nobody responded, and he opened the door of dormitory No. 1. Ten youths lay in their hammocks in sweet repose. The face of Harry Fitzroy was positively childlike in its serenity.

"It wasn't any o' that lot," muttered the captain, and softly closed the door.

In No. 2 all were sound asleep, too. Some, indeed, were snoring. One boy was quite under the bedclothes, and judging by the gasping sounds he made, was suffering from nightmare.

"None o' that lot," muttered the captain, and quietly shut them in.

But why dwell upon the subject? The captain went round, and found all his precious pupils in a state of oblivion—all in the enjoyment of that refreshing sleep which follows a well-spent day.

"It's a puzzle," he said to himself, as he walked up stairs. "They can't be gammoning; if they are it's a breach of discipline, and I'll—"

He had reached the top of the stairs, soliloquising, when a most unearthly yell of derision from below made him skip and stagger against the wall. He was so scared that he dropped his lantern, and it went out, and down the stairs bouncing from step to step, and rolling away into a corner.

"Oh, it's all right," said the captain, when he had recovered a bit. "You'll have your fling, and I'll have mine. Discipline must be kept up. Go to bed—will you?"

"Ha-ha! Ho-ho! Ha-ha!" from below.

"Then, if you won't, stop in the passage, and be cursed to you!" he said. "And mind this, if any of you catch cold don't come to me for gruel."

"Beetles," he said, as he turned to the naval instructor, "they must have their little fling to-night, but to-morrow I'll have them up, and get at the ringleaders. Pass the rum, and, mind this, we'll have your friend, Chops, up sharp."

"Ay—ay, sir!" said Beetles. "He'll put 'em straight. With the eye of Chops on 'em there'll be no more o' this ere fun."

CHAPTER VI.

JOB AND JAKE.

It was morning, and Mrs. Brown stood upon the fore-castle, ready to serve out the day's rations. She was attended by Captain Timber and Beetles, who were ready to support discipline, and assisted by two nigger boys about twelve years old—twins, respectively named Job and Jake.

These two treasures Captain Timber had picked up from a foreign vessel, and made servitors to Mrs. Brown, and very great blessings they were to that worthy matron, whose nature, ever slightly acidulated, threatened, under the trial of having two such sprites to command, to become permanently sour.

A huge can of boiling coffee, with mugs, stood on the left of the lady—a mighty tray of rations on her right. She simply directed, Job served out the coffee, and Jake the rations.

The pupils of the School on the Sea were drawn up amidships, looking, as the captain said, as if "they hadn't a fragment of the devil in 'em," and a more orderly lot of boys never gladdened the eyes of a school-master. But then, you see,

all were hungry, and a breach of discipline might have been punished by a stoppage of breakfast.

"Order there!" cried Captain Timber, glaring at them. "Now, Mrs. Brown, are you ready?"

"Job, begin to fill the jugs," said Mrs. Brown.

"You hear dat?" said Jake. "Now, Job, 'gin to fill."

"Mine dat bisness ob your'n, Jake," returned Job.

"Be quiet, both of you," cried Mrs. Brown, turning wrathfully upon them.

"What for den he sult me?" cried Job.

"Who sulted you?" demanded Jake.

"Avast, my lads!" cried the captain.

"Jus' what I tell you, Jake—you make 'de cap'en angry," said Job.

"De cap'en say dat you am de biggest lily cuss goin'!" returned Jake.

"I said nothing of the sort," said Captain Timber. "Avast there!"

"Ah, cap'n, you tink so, den?" said Jake, with a knowing look.

"Hold your tongue, you little brutes!" cried Mrs. Brown, suddenly producing a rolling-pin, and giving Jake a rap on the head that made him howl frightfully.

She sought to favor Job in a similar manner, but he dodged out of the way, and the blow fell upon the coffee can, knocking the spout off.

"I never came near such little brutes," said Mrs. Brown. "Come here, and pour out the coffee."

"Gib your word, missus, den, dat you leab me alone," said Job, from behind the coffee-can.

"Come along, then."

Job came out and commenced his task, but he could not stick to it. He was so fond of watching his brother that he could not keep his eyes off him, and it may be said that Jake returned the compliment.

"Number one mess," cried Captain Timber. "Harry Fitzroy, advance and take rations."

"Now, Jake," said Job, from the coffee-pot, "you gib de young genelman de proper quantity."

"You gib dem de mugs full," said Jake.

A howl from Job, who had allowed one of the mugs to run over, and filled his boot with hot coffee, stopped the proceedings for a moment. In his agony he left the tap running, and fell back upon Mrs. Brown, who in her turn fell upon Jake, and he went headlong into the ration tray.

"Confound 'em," cried Captain Timber, turning off the tap; "here, you ebony warmints. Stand by—Mrs. Brown, stand by."

"I'm driven nigh distracted by 'em," cried Mrs. Brown, as she got upon her legs. "I am sure, Captain Timber, saving your presence, that you must have got these things here to drive me stark raving mad."

"Look here, my lads," said the captain, addressing the culprits in a sepulchral tone, "you are here under Mrs. Brown's orders, and you must obey 'em."

"You hear dat, Jake?" said Job.

"Mine you obey de captain's orders, Job," said Jake.

"If you don't I'll skin you," said Captain Timber. "Stand by, you young devil, and I'll take the coffee."

"And get out of the way," cried Mrs. Brown, giving Jake a staggering blow on the side of his head.

She and the captain then served out rations for the day, and the captain of each company of ten took the lot apportioned to him. The coffee, owing to Job's carelessness, ran a little short, but Mrs. Brown got some more hot water and eked it out. The boys were then dismissed to breakfast below.

As they were going down, David Crusher elbowed Harry Fitzroy in a rather unceremonious manner. Harry, without the least ceremony, elbowed him.

"Get out of the way, will you?" cried David.

"You get to the rear," returned Harry, coolly.

"Fight it out," said Ned Bowling.

"By all means," said Harry; "after breakfast, if agreeable."

"I'm agreeable," said David Crusher.

"A fight—a fight!" went the whisper around.

"Where?" asked some.

Harry heard the question.

"I think it had better come off in our crib," he said; "it's quiet there. Say in half an hour."

"He's a plucky one," murmured a dozen voices.

"I'll pound him to a jelly!" said David Crusher.

"He's a strong one," said the listeners, and the coming fight was looked forward to with much interest.

Meanwhile, Captain Timbers and Beetles were

on the way to their own breakfast, when a voice from the vessel's side hailed them.

"Ship ahoy!"

"Who's that?" asked Captain Timber.

"Don't know, and don't care," growled Beetles. "I'm off to breakfast," and he stumped away.

Captain Timber, however, went to the side, and looked over. A shore-boat was there, with a water-man, and a very limp, mild-looking gentleman in it.

"The *Heart of Oak*?" said the waterman.

"Same," replied the captain. "What's your freight, and where's your papers?"

"Here he is," said the waterman. "Jump up, mister, and I'll bring your traps on deck."

"If you wouldn't mind helping me," said the limp gentleman, and, with a little assistance he managed to get upon deck, where he stood with wondering eyes, and uncertain legs.

"Captain Timber, I presume?" he said. "Dear me, how very unsteady this ship is."

"My name's Cap'n Timber; what then?" said the gentleman addressed.

"My name is Jones—David Jones—come by appointment to—dear me, this ship is very unsteady—come to—may I ask your permission to sit down?"

"Sartinly," replied Captain Timber. "Bring yourself to an anchor on that bucket."

"I came to assume the—oh! this constant motion is very unpleasant," continued Mr. David Jones. "Will you excuse me while I take a sip?"

He brought out a railway refreshment bottle of brandy, and drank a little of its contents.

"I come up to take up the post—oh! this heaving—may I ask if you always have this rough sea on?"

"The sea's as smooth as she can be; there's nothing but a ground swell on," replied Captain Timber.

"It's very bad, whatever it is," said David Jones. "It makes me feel quite giddy. I think if I could retire for a moment—"

"Go to leeward," said Captain Timber, "and have it out. I'll come back when I've had my breakfast."

The captain went to breakfast, and came back to find Mr. David Jones lying on the deck with a lack-luster eye. When addressed he made a feeble convulsive movement with his legs, but his tongue was silent.

"The sea's new to you," said Captain Timber; "but you'll get over that."

David Jones groaned.

"Now, a bit o' fat pork is—" began Captain Timber; but ere he could finish his recommendation David Jones was once more hanging over the side.

"What a misery to be a landsman!" growled Captain Timber. "They ain't got the witals of a man. Halloo! another row!"

He ran aft, and nearly fell over Beetles, who was lying on the deck stretched out, and peering down into the passage of the dormitories.

"What's up, Beetles?"

"Sich a fight. Stand by. That's it. What a noser—ha! down he goes."

"Discipline," murmured Captain Timber.

"Discipline be bottled!" muttered Beetles.

"Go it, my lad. Lor', it's as good as a play. That's the stuff as we makes seamen of."

Captain Timber so far forgot his position and dignity as to lie down beside Beetles to watch the scene below, and it stirred his heart, as the sound of a trumpet does that of an old war-horse.

The fight between Harry and David Crusher had come to an end, in consequence of a foul blow from the latter, but the school was now split up into two parties, with Harry the captain of one, and David the other. Each had about a fair share of supporters, and the fight raged gloriously.

A sort of boundary in the passage had been tacitly agreed upon, and the object of each party was to drive the other over it. Grand rushes were made, stiffish blows exchanged, wrestling tricks resorted to, and already a score were *hors de combat*, some holding their noses, others rubbing their shins, and a few hid in the corners in mortal terror.

Among the latter was Jerry Snivel, who had crept close to the staircase, and lay cowering there, white with fear. The captain espied him, and for the time, oblivious of his instructions as to order and discipline, urged him to join the fray.

"Up, my lad," he cried, "and give it to that long booby who is scratching like a woman. Now, my lad, don't play the skunk—up and at 'em."

"It's about the best bit o' fun I've seen," said

Beetles, rattling his wooden legs on the deck in an ecstasy.

"Another down—there's a nose to show his mother."

The battle was no child's play, and was not the less fervent because it had been suddenly brought about.

Harry Fitzroy was a high-spirited fellow, dashing and free, and the way he gave and took in the fight won him golden opinions.

David Crusher, in the thick of the fight, dealt out sledge-hammer blows that floored a boy every time they fell.

Thrice had he and Harry come together and exchanged hearty specimens of the fistic art, and thrice had they been separated by the tide of war. The blood of the boys was up, and that tide was running very strong indeed.

Suddenly two more aspirants for fame, in the forms of Job and Jake, appeared upon the scene. Where they came from Captain Timber never knew, but there they were, looking on for a few seconds, and then, without any warning, closing with each other, and rolling upon the ground, striking, kicking, and scratching like half a dozen.

"Hurrah for the Fitzroys!" cried one of the boys.

"Three cheers for the Crushers!" yelled another, and again a mad rush took place, and the tide of battle went over Job and Jake, and at least a score fell over them, forming a struggling heap upon the lower deck.

"Beetles," cried Captain Timber, "we shall have some of them murdered. I must stop it. Discipline must be maintained."

"All right, sir," grinned Beetles, "go and do it."

Captain Timber looked around him for a piece of rope, and finding a bit suitable, rapidly made a knot and went to the staircase. In his haste he slipped and went down with a crash. The noise he made turned some eyes upon him. There was a cry of "Ware Timber!" and in less than ten seconds the fight was over, every school-boy had disappeared, and the captain was left with Job and Jake.

The twin niggers had suffered no more than they might have done under the circumstances, and they would have skedaddled, too; but the doors of the dormitories were closed, and the captain stood in the way of their other means of exit.

Very upright and very attentive they stood as the captain, lightly swaying the rope, proceeded to address them.

"My lads," he said, "there's one thing that must be had aboard ship, or that ship must go to the devil. You hear that?"

"You hear dat, Jake?" said Job; "de ship am to go to de debil."

"You listen to de cap'en, Job," said Jake; "it much better for you dan—"

"Look at me!" roared the captain, "and don't grin and chatter at each other like a pair of monkeys."

"Now, Jake, listen to de cap'en, look at him and—"

"You not talk to me, Job. What de debil am dat for, massa?"

"That's for not listening to orders!" roared the captain, "trying to get another cut at him, and as for you, Job, I'll—"

He aimed a blow at Job, but Job went through his legs like a dash of light, and the captain was upon his back, with a bewildered notion that the ship had blown up, or run aground, or been run into, and that she was sinking, and he was knocked out of time; but this feeling passed away, and he got upon his feet.

"I've begun it," he growled, "and I'll go through with it; but I'm blowed, if I'd a known it, if I wouldn't ha' invested the money in another way, or got somebody to take the thing in hand—or—Beetles!"

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Get under way, and take yourself into my cabin. I'll write to that friend of yours this minute. I mean to have discipline here, or sink the lot as it stands. As for them niggers, if they come nigh me again, I'll send 'em to Hecabo. Go ahead—I'll join you in a minute. I'll just get that new chap to open school with some of that rubbishing reading and writing, and that'll keep 'em quiet."

But Mr. James was not able to open the school that day. It was as much as he could do to get into the hammock which the captain, with many growls, slung for him, and there he lay undergoing those torments which some who go down to the sea in ships are compelled to endure.

He heard the captain's voice many times during the day, and there seemed to be a deal of running to and fro on board—his cabin was on

the deck, where most of the noise seemed to be—he also caught glimpses of flying forms as they flitted past the door, and one boy, with cool assurance, came into his cabin, and painted on his receptacle for clothes, "Davy Jones' locker," which he thought was a kind but familiar attention emanating from the captain.

"My name is David—not Davy—my boy," he feebly said.

The letter-writer paid no heed to him, but departed, and ran full tilt against Timber at the door. The captain aimed a blow at him and missed.

"All right, my lad," he said. "Your turn now; mine by-and-by."

"I say, Captain Timber," cried the tutor.

"Well, sir?"

"Your pupils seem to be running a little wild."

"We are a little out of order, but we'll have discipline by-and-by, when we've got the police."

"The police?"

"Yes; Inspector Chops is coming. He'll cool 'em down."

"I've got into a queer shop," groaned Jones; "but I suppose it will be all right by-and-by. Anyhow, I'm sure of my pay."

The day passed, and the night came on. Jones felt a little better, and fell into a doze. From this he was aroused by a terrific crash in the cabin, and starting up, his eyes fell upon Beetles, seated on the floor. Beetles was a stranger to him, and the sight of that limbless wonder of the deep made the tutor's hair stiffen with fright.

"I've got into an unnatural land," he muttered; "I'm among the Arabian Nights. I'm at sea with monsters. Now, he's speaking."

"Yo heave—yo ho!" sang Beetles. "A fresh sea and a blowing breeze, my lads! Now she goes! take your bearings!" Here he caught sight of the tutor. "Give us a hand, my lad!"

David Jones looked at the extended hook, and turned cold. He shrank back into the hammock without giving the required assistance.

"Well, if you won't, I must help myself," said Beetles, and the hook, passing through the hammock, entered the fleshy part of the tutor's leg, and the shriek he gave was wafted o'er the sea to the very shore.

CHAPTER VII.

A NEW CHARACTER, WHO WILL, WE HOPE, FIND FAVOR WITH OUR READERS.

THE trains to Sportjaw are generally well filled, and the passengers are well besprinkled with soldiers and sailors, who are either about to join their ship for the first time, or are returning thither after a furlough.

The compartments of the third class are not only very full, but very lively. Soldiers and sailors sing and make merry when they can, but they are not usually offensively noisy; and when they get anybody into the carriage who is so, they invariably object earnestly to their presence.

Perhaps of all men in the world policemen are the most obnoxious to our soldiers and Jack Tars. When they meet officious or disagreeable officers they very often fall foul of them, the policemen generally getting the worst of it as far as fisticuffs go, and the others coming off second best with regard to law. Why this feeling should exist among the guardians of our country, we cannot say, but that it does exist is an undeniable fact.

Now, on a certain day, when the School on the Sea had been about three days in operation, a certain man, with a lean and hungry look, carrying a bundle, got into a third class carriage, and having secured a corner seat looked around him with the lofty air of conscious superiority. There was even an air of authority about him which few could have mistaken; but, nevertheless, nobody was awed thereby.

"A fine evening, mate," said one of the sailors.

"The evening," replied the lofty stranger, "might be wuss."

"Ave quid?" pursued the sailor, presenting his cake of pigtail.

"Not at present, my man," replied the stranger. "I'm a-going to h'indulge in a h'awannar, presently."

"Going for to indulge in a what?" asked the sailor.

Every eye in the carriage was on the lofty stranger.

"A h'awannar," he said—"a gentleman's smoke."

"And who may you be," asked the sailor, "when you are at home?"

"My name," replied the other, "is Chops—"

Julius Cæsar Chops, late h'Inspector in Her Majesty's Service."

"Inspector of wot?" demanded the sailor, sternly.

"Of the perlice," replied the other.

A general grunt followed this reply, and an ominous scowl settled upon the face of more than one present. Mr. Julius Cæsar Chops took out a bottle from his breast pocket, and drank therefrom. This seemed to make him more affable.

"I've got my uniform in a bundle," he said, "and a lovely one it is—a little worn—and the hat is of the old sort—stove-pipe—but a good 'un still."

"I'd like to see that," said the sailor, stoutly.

"So you shall," said Chops, and without heeding the glances which were exchanged, he stooped down and brought out his bundle from under the seat.

"I keeps this uniform," he said, as he began untying it, "for the memory of the many happy days I've had in it. In this suit I arrested Smasher, the murderer—took him up on the top o' St. Paul's, and brought him all the way down on my back. Lor! what a struggle that was! There—that's the hat."

He held up a chapeau of the old stove-pipe school—tall, stiff, and remorseless. The sailor took it, and examined it carefully.

"Mates," he said, looking around, "this is his hat!"

"Ay—ay," they replied, "we see it."

"Then this for his hat," and then that son of the sea got up, put the hat on the seat, and sat upon it.

The crash was fearful. A dark frown settled on the face of the owner.

"My lad," he said, "do you know what you've done?"

"No, and don't care," was the reply.

"You've crushed the symbol of the law," said Chops, "and I arrest you in the name of her Majesty our Royal Queen—defender of the faith."

"Oh! do you?" said the sailor, drawing out the hat, just like an accordion.

"Yes," said Chops, "so give yourself up."

"I'll see you jiggered first."

Chops took a sip at the bottle and armed himself for the fray.

"The law," he said, "is the bulwark institution of the country; by means of that great empire, trade, commerce, and the licensed witelling business is carried on. The law must be obeyed—I am the law."

"If you don't want your jaw broken, keep your hands off me," said the sailor.

Chops took another sip, and produced a truncheon—evidently home-made.

"You see this?" he said.

"Yes, I see it," replied the other.

"Do you still refuse to give yourself up?"

"In-course I do," rejoined the sailor.

Chops took another sip, and turned up the right cuff of his coat.

"The law," he said, looking around, "must be enforced. That great empire which is the bobstay of society must be kept a-going. In the name of that law I call on all of yer to help me to arrest this traitor."

Nobody answered for a moment, but one man in the corner came out with a recommendation.

"Put up that ere old tile o' yourn," he said, "and shut your mouth."

Chops turned up the left cuff, took another sip, and stood up.

"The law," he said, "is strong enough to carry out itself. I call on all of you to keep still while I arrest this man."

Then turning to the culprit, he said: "Pass over that hat, young man."

The hat was given up readily enough, and Chops, feeling that he was making way, put his hand upon the sailor's shoulder, and said:

"Consider yourself in custody."

"Consider yourself knocked down," replied the prisoner, and dealt Chops such a blow in the ribs that he went back into his corner all in a heap. A roar of laughter followed.

Chops, as soon as he was able, out with his bottle, took one—two—three sips, and then produced a note-book.

"Your names and addresses," he said. "I'll summon the lot."

A yell of derisive laughter answered him, and the spirit of mischief being afloat, they took his note-book away, drew him up and down the carriage, rumpling his hair, digging him in the ribs, and otherwise maltreating him. He was powerless in their hands.

"But you shall all suffer," he gasped. "You don't know the man you've attacked. You don't know what it is to go dead agin the law. It's a strong h'engine."

"Well, don't come it over us," said a soldier. "Be a man, and act like a pal. Pass that bottle o' yourn around. Here, have a sip o' mine."

"Why couldn't you say you want to be friendly?" said Chops, brightening up in a moment.

"I don't want to be hard on you. I don't want to enforce the law."

"Of course not," said the soldier. "You wouldn't do it if you could—oh, no!"

"I stands by my duty," replied Chops, "but I don't want to be overstrict. Let's be pals."

"There's my bottle," said the soldier.

"And there's mine," said Chops. "There ain't much in it, but you'll find it good."

The exchange of bottles became infectious, and peace was restored. Chops drank of everything, and soon the eye of the law became hazy, and the voice of the law began huskily to sing a song.

At a half-way station the refreshment bottles were recharged, and Chops, who got out with the rest for a few minutes, created no little sensation. His friends in the carriage had induced him to put on the official coat and hat, which in conjunction with a pair of very loud check trousers, had a startling effect.

"I'm the law," he said, sitting on a porter's barrow. "I'm the representative of the queen, and it's my duty to preserve the peace, and to arrest all public offenders. I ask you all for three cheers for the law."

His friends obliged him, and the station-master, little used to such festive scenes, came up, calling out: "Take your seats, please—train going on."

"Who are you?" demanded Chops, getting on to his feet.

"Take your seats—take your seats—train going on," cried the station-master. "Now then, sir, are you going on?"

"Stop a minute," said Chops, fumbling in his tail coat pocket. "I'll settle your business. Where's my symbol of the law? Who's got my truncheon?"

"Are you going on or not?" asked the station-master.

"Come on, mate," cried the others, who had taken their seats.

"The law," said Chops, turning slowly around on one leg, "is a mighty h'engine—"

"Put him in," said the station-master, addressing the porters. Two at once promptly hustled him towards the carriage, ignoring his expostulations and threats. He was bundled in, the door closed, and the train moved on, but, hanging half out of the window, he continued to warn the station-master of the pains and penalties which would follow his unlawful proceedings, until the station was out of sight.

When he returned to his seat the bottles went freely around. One sang, another sang, and the choruses were carried out with an energy which left nothing to be desired. In some instances, where the songs had no chorus, each man became a chorus unto himself, and the effect was delightful. When the train arrived at the terminus they were all singing but Chops, who was weeping on the bosom of the sailor—who sat upon his hat—declaring that he loved him like a brother.

"Member thish," he said, thickly; "member thish—that you've done me kindish this day whish I never can forgetsh. But for you I should have been sho lonely. You've shuppported the law like a mansh. Brother of my 'art, I thank yer."

"We took kindly to each other from the fust," said the sailor, whose ideas were also rather hazy. "Don't let us part."

"We'll never partsh!" said Chops.

The ticket-collector's appearance checked this brotherly outburst, and a little confusion took place in consequence of Chops being unable to produce his bit of pasteboard.

"I had him shomwhere," he said, feebly fumbling in his pockets.

"Look alive, then," said the collector. "Some of you help him."

Ready hands emptied the pockets of Chops, and a miscellaneous collection of articles was produced. A black stock, a collar, a dicky, a Gordon plaid shirt with a hole as big as a cheese-plate in the back, and two old socks, were among the treasures produced.

When the search was over Chops remembered that he had put the ticket into one of his boots—short Wellingtons, well worn at the heels.

He was incapable of removing them, but his friends did it for him; and only those who have tried to take Wellington boots off a man who is very drunk and very limp can have the least idea of the task which fell upon them.

But they got through it at last, and the ticket

was discovered, with the date and every letter-press obliterated.

"I can't take this," said the collector. "It might be anything."

"I'll take you," said Chops, feeling for his truncheon, "if ye don't move on."

The station-master was called, and he, too, narrowly escaped being assailed by Chops, whose majestic bearing would have been awe-inspiring if he could have kept his body straight. One of the occupants of the carriage had seen Chops take his ticket, and he was allowed to pass.

Chops collected his garments, and somebody, with the kindest attention, tied his bundle for him; but there were many things sticking out—the leg of the official trousers, the strings of the dicky, and an arm of the Gordon plaid shirt among them. Chops, however, was unconscious of this, and with an air of dignity he staggered out of the station, and pulling up before a cab-rank, asked his way.

"Which is the way to the shea?" he asked.

"Wot she?" asked a cabman.

"He means the sea," said another. "He's agoin' to sink his property, and then drown hisself."

"Afore you go, mister," said a third, "register the pattern o' that ere shirt."

Chops looked from one to another, and had a dim idea that he was being chaffed—an indignity he was not likely to tamely submit to.

"If I could only find it," he said, groping about the outside of his pocket, "I'd rest you all. Which is the way to the Heartsh Oak?"

"I know wot he wants," cried a sharp boy, "the school-ship—the Heart o' Oak."

"My boy," said Chops, "you have a 'telligence 'yond your 'ears. Lead on."

"All right, my lord," said the boy, "what'll you stand?"

"Tuppence," said Chops, with a lordly air, somewhat marred by the whole of the Gordon shirt dropping out of the bundle.

"Walker," said the boy; "it's a mile and a 'arf."

"Fourpence," said Chops.

"Done," said the boy; "shall I carry the bundle, my lord?"

"No," replied Chops, sober enough to have an eye to his property. "I'll carry it myself, young man."

CHAPTER VIII.

CHOPS REPORTS HIMSELF.

THE appearance of such a peculiar-looking individual as Chops was, in his semi-official rig-out, could not in a large and busy town fail to excite interest, and a train of followers soon organized themselves to do honor to the stranger.

Boys, of course, formed the greater proportion, some of them abandoning business of the utmost importance, others deserting their games to follow the dignified representative of the law; but there were not wanting men and women who followed, and marveled as they went:

"Who is he? What is he?" were the questions asked, and nobody could answer correctly.

"It's a new game—he's a street nigger," said one boy.

"No he ain't," returned another; "his face ain't black—he's a comic singer."

"Give us a song," roared half a dozen, and one more daring than the rest jerked his coat-tails, and made him stagger back several paces. This is the sort of thing which cannot be done with the representatives of justice without bringing vengeance on the offender.

Chops dealt a back-handed blow, which took effect upon the boy, and sent him sprawling. With the promptitude of his class he set up a dismal howl, and one of the crowd, a man in his shirt sleeves and a leather apron, almost as bad as Chops himself, forthwith elected himself as the champion of the injured youth.

"Wot's that for?" he asked; "how would you like it if that boy was yourn?"

Chops, getting his back against a letter-box, took in the proportions of the speaker. They were such that the law could easily prevail over, and, with the stealthiness of inebriety, the representative of the law felt for his home-made truncheon.

"I ax you," said leather apron again, "wot you meant by striking of a boy?"

"Who are you?" demanded Chops.

"My name is Dick Stubbs, and I don't care who knows it," was the reply. "I'm a leather-dresser by trade, and I lives in Woppers-court. Now then."

He came within easy distance, and Chops being favored by fortune, found his truncheon. He was also gifted with unwonted activity, and

bringing it out, he dealt Dick Stubbs, leather-dresser, a blow on his cranium that made it ring like a potter's vessel.

Dick went down, and, as rarely happens in such cases, found very few sympathizers. The mob in fact, did not believe that Chops was a real policeman—he was looked upon as a comic singer, and this act was especially funny. No clown was ever more successful when he jumped upon a baby, and everybody roared with delight.

Mr. Richard Stubbs was so impressed by the unexpected blow that he made no effort to rise, and Chops, feeling that he had done his duty as a man, walked, or rather staggered away.

"To the *Heartchy Oaks*," he said.

"All right, my lord," said the guide, and the procession moved on.

At the next corner they encountered a real policeman, who looked with curious eye at the burlesque of himself that Chops presented, and there was a strong desire expressed in his face to run him in; but as the crowd was good-humored, and Chops himself apparently passive, he did nothing but follow at a respectable distance.

On his part, Chops, on seeing a man and a brother, was inclined to embrace him, but happily the thought that he was an official of high position saved him from this risky proceeding, and he merely said as he passed:

"All swell, good-night, all swell."

The crowd did not trouble this great man; he rather felt it to be a compliment paid to his dignity, and when any member of it returned to him such articles as he was continually dropping out of his bundle, he merely thanked them with the air of one who knew the attention to be his due, but still was pleased to acknowledge it.

They reached the common which bordered the beach, and here Chops, missing the friendly rails and walls of the streets, occasionally diverged so much from his course that a little friendly propping was much needed. This was given by his anxious admirers without stint, until Chops, for some reason or other, suddenly conceived the attention to be an insult, and reproduced his favorite weapon.

The memory of the vengeance dealt out to Dick Stubbs was still green within them, and a circle was rapidly made.

"If," said Chops, in a warning voice, "you don't know your plaishes, I'll teach you."

"Don't you hit me," said a man with a very pugilistic cut of face.

"I'll smash you if you interfere with me," replied Chops; "when a man's got the law on at his backsh, he—he can do anything. Whersh that boy?"

"Here, my lord," replied the urchin.

"Lead on!" said Chops, pointing, in imitation of the Duke of Wellington's statue at Hyde Park corner. "Away to the *Hearsh of Oaksh*."

They got him down to the sea, and a boat was hailed. The waterman came up, looking doubtful.

"What—this 'ere party?" he asked.

"Bound for the *Hearsh of Oaksh*," replied Chops, and, having announced his designation, he staggered forward, and fell into the sea.

They got him out, and, after a little demurring on the part of the waterman, he was put into the boat. Then came the Arab's demand for fourpence, which Chops managed, after much fumbling, to get out of his pocket, and drop overboard. The boy made a plunge into the sea, and rescued twopence, but the rest was lost to him forever.

The departure of so striking an individual could not take place without the usual honors, and as the boat shoved off, the crowd gave a loud:

"Hurrah!"

"Whatsh the matter with 'em?" asked Chops.

"They're a-cheering you," replied the waterman.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAPTAIN HAS HIS DOUBTS.

CHOPS got upon his feet to acknowledge the honor in a few appropriate words, but the movement of the boat upset him instantly, and he fell back over the seat, and lay with a pair of well-worn soles presented for the waterman's inspection.

"He'll be quiet now," thought the man, and pulled away to the ship.

The afternoon sun was setting over the hills as the boat drew up. There was nobody in sight, and the waterman shouted:

"Ship ahoy!"

No answer.

"*Heart of Oak*, ahoy!"

Again no answer.

"Ahoy—ahoy—ahoy!"

Still no answer.

"I must help him up the gangway myself," thought the waterman, and, making his boat fast, he assisted Chops to rise.

"Come on, mate," he said; "here we are."

Chops, who had been enjoying a refreshing nap, blinked, but made no reply. The waterman, assisting behind, got him on deck.

Captain Timber at that moment came out of his cabin, and, seeing strangers aboard, advanced. As he caught sight of Chops he turned ghastly pale.

"Who are you?" he said.

"I," replied Chops, "am Judy Cheesy Shops," which was the best he could make of his name.

Captain Timber was so staggered by the strange phenomenon before him that at first he was unable to settle in his mind what course to pursue. So this was the Chops who was to keep order; this was the Chops who, with his eye and arm, was to check insubordination. Who can wonder that dark doubts entered his mind?

"So," he said, "your name is Chops?"

"Shops," replied Chops, feebly; "give it the proper pronunciation, old man."

"Shops—Chops—or Slops," cried Captain Timber, "it's all the same to me. Get away. Take yourself off."

Chops steadied himself against the mainmast, and felt about for his truncheon. It was necessary for the law to assert itself.

"You're a low, vulgar rascal," he said, "as must be put down."

"Confound it! I'll put you down," growled Timber. "Here, you fellow—you land-crab—take this cargo of yours back again?"

But the land-crab—the waterman—was already far away on his backward journey, and neither heard nor heeded. Captain Timber clutched his locks in despair and swore roundly.

Once more he turned in wrath towards Chops, but that mighty potentate had sunk into a sitting posture, and was dozing off.

"I say, you fellow!" roared the captain.

"The law," murmured Chops in his sleep—"the noble law."

Captain Timber gave him a kick that rolled him over, but he still slept on.

"Salt and battery," he murmured, "fined five shillings."

What could be done under the circumstances? The boys were at school, under the tuition of Mr. David Jones—who had rather a hard time of it—and there were no hands to lower a boat. He might, perhaps, do it himself, but could he get Chops over the side single-handed? He feared not.

While musing over the various points of the dilemma, the captain heard the sound of familiar stumping, and Beetles came forth from his cabin.

"Hi!" roared the captain. "Come here."

Beetles advanced—his eyes fell upon the recumbent figure of Chops.

"So he's come," he said, quite calmly. "Well, I'm glad on it. We are right now."

"Don't you see the state he's in?" demanded the captain.

"The journey seems to ha' played him out," replied Beetles.

"Played him out!—he's drunk!"

"Whichsoever he may be, it doesn't much matter. Give him time to come around, and you'll see the man he is."

The captain swore yet another oath and retired to his cabin, where he sat down and took the bearing of the case.

"Here's how it stands," he said, mapping it out with his thumb upon the table. "I've gone in for a venture as I hadn't fully calculated on. There are reefs and shoals as I hadn't put down in the chart—there are storms ahead as the barometer didn't give due notice on, but shall I cut the voyage on that account? Shall I ax another man to work my ship, or shall I sink her? Avast, Roger, don't think of it. Stand by! Bear ahead! Up with all sail, and run her through."

He opened his rum-can and filled up a glass, sighing as he did so. He bolted the contents of that glass down and sighed again.

"Roger," he said, "the times is changed, but you ain't changed with 'em. You had better ha' stayed in your old house at Peckham, and allowed the nation to burst up in her bilers. Better have enjoyed Scareaway's money ashore. This 'ere venture will cost you a pot o' money and nothing come of it. Ha! go it, my lads!"

The latter part of his remarks were addressed to the boys, who, it seemed, were just released from school, and were shouting and running

about the deck. Chops had been discovered, and hoisted promptly upon the shoulders of a party, with Harry Fitzroy for a leader. Captain Timber peeped out, and, seeing what was going on, smiled grimly.

"They may do what they like with him," he said; "drown him if they like."

The school had, as we have intimated, divided into two parties—one headed by Harry Fitzroy, and the other by David Crusher. It was no common feud existing between the lads; already they hated each other mortally, and every possible pretext was fixed upon for a quarrel between them.

They were well matched, and already they had fought twice, the result being a draw, owing to the excitable nature of their supporters, who never would keep out of it, and what began in a private quarrel ended in a public fight.

The elevation of Chops was soon made the subject for a third quarrel by David Crusher. Chops, refreshed by sleep, was awakened by the motion of being carried, and, arriving at an imperfect idea of what was going on, demanded to be put down.

"Turn him up, my lads!" cried Harry.

"If I only could get it," muttered Chops, vainly endeavoring to get his hand into his pocket, "I'd awenge this h'insult offered to the force. Put me down, you h'imps. Oh, my limbs. I'm being shook to a jelly!"

"Put him down, will you?" said David Crusher. "Let the man alone."

"Turn him up," cried Harry, defiantly. "Up with him, lads!"

"Hurrah!" cried the carriers, and up went Chops into the air.

They caught him neatly as he fell, and ran on with him. David Crusher gave a shrill whistle—the signal he used to call his followers together—and a rapid division took place. Beetles came out from the cabin, but seeing what was going on, beat a prompt retreat, and watched the affair through his little window.

"I'll tell you what," cried Chops, "you don't know the man you—oh! my sides—the man that you are—oh! lor—shaking to pieces. I represent the law. I am the law. Oh! lor."

"Up with him, boys!" cried Harry. "It's the bobby we've been threatened with. Toss him up!"

"Now, lads," cried David Crusher, addressing his followers, "we have as much right to toss the bobby as the other party, and we'll have him. Now, then!"

"All ready! Hurrah!"

At this moment Mr. David Jones appeared, on his way to tea. Perceiving that mischief was in the wind, he resolved to interfere. Stepping in between, he threw up his arms, and cried:

"Order, boys—order, I say! The boy that disobeys shall be—"

The rest was lost in the shout of the attacking party. He was swept on one side, and sent staggering into the scupper, where he prudently kept, and watched the fight.

The rush was tremendous, and partially successful. David Crusher and one of his men succeeded in grasping the right arm of Chops, which they nearly dislocated at the first tug. The stitches of his coat went off like a cracker. Harry Fitzroy dealt David a blow under the chin, and sent him staggering back.

With a savage yell David returned to the charge, and the two boys closed. Both wrestled well, and every dodge was tried in vain; they still stood firm, while their followers fought around them.

Ned Bowling did good execution, and had quite a little circle of fallen ones around him—Jerry Snivel among them—and others, on Harry's side were doing great work, when a change in the tide of events took place.

Chops got at his truncheon.

In a moment it was out, and one of his supporters got a crack that dropped him. This persuaded the others to lower Chops, which they did so suddenly that he came upon his back like a flounder. In a moment, however, he was upon his feet again.

He dashed into their midst, and they made way for him right and left. An angry man with a weapon is rather more than boys can be expected to face, and half of them ran for it. Harry and David, struggling, stood before him.

All the instincts of his race came upon him. The eyes of Chops glared—the nostrils of Chops dilated. Here were two boys breaking the law, and rioting in the open. People who break the law must suffer—expostulation would be thrown away—and Chops went at them.

The first blow fell upon David Crusher, and the second likewise; for Harry saw it coming, and dodged it. David turned, and seeing who

was his assailant, acted on the first impulse, and bolted down below.

The retreat of a leader had the usual effect. Those who made a faint stand followed him pell-mell; even Harry's followers deserted him, and he was left alone on deck with the infuriated Chops.

"Let me get a knock at you, my lad!" said Chops, as they dodged. "You don't know the man as you got hoisted up, and then dropped on deck, and made his body rattle like a bag o' bones. Let me get one cut at you! I've got the law on my side, and if I kill you, it's only manslaughter."

Harry alone could not hope to face so great a man, and he, too, bolted below as soon as he got a chance. Chops followed him to the head of the stairs, and seeing all dark below, elected not to follow. For the present it sufficed that he was triumphant.

"Chops—Chops!" said a gasping voice behind him.

He turned, and saw Beetles coming towards him with a very excited face. The old salt was in too much of a hurry, and tripping, fell at the feet of his friend in a heap.

"Goodness!" murmured Chops; "he's half murdered himself!"

"Never mind," gasped Beetles; "shake my hook. Chops, you are a man—you are a marvel—you are the man we've wanted! They'll be kept in order now. Here's the cap'n, look at him, and tell me if I was right or wrong."

Captain Timber advanced without speaking, and grasping Chops by the hand, regarded him with much emotion.

"Ain't he the man?" insisted Beetles.

"He is," replied Captain Timber—"he is! I'm sorry I mistook him."

"I ain't afeard o' nothin' and nobody," said Chops. "All I want is fair play and liberty of action."

"You shall have it," said Captain Timber.

"Give me a private lock-up," continued Chops, "and let me keep 'em there until they sees the h'errors of their way. Give me that, and don't ax no questions."

"You shall have it, and I won't interfere," said Captain Timber. "Discipline must be maintained."

"Don't trammel me—don't hamper me," said Chops, who felt that the hour he had sighed and longed for had come at last. "Let me represent the law—let me be the law, as I was in the h'olden time."

"Done, I say!" said Captain Timber. "And what says Beetles?"

"Done, too!" replied Beetles. "I also says, so be it."

"Then," said Captain Timber, with a beaming face, "you may consider it done, Mister Chops; and I looks forward to a joyful continuation of the School on the Sea."

CHAPTER X.

A MEETING AND A RESOLVE.

A CROWDED meeting was held that night in No. 1 dormitory, and all the boys were present. Harry Fitzroy, being the captain of No. 1, was voted into the chair, and David Crusher, burying the hatchet for the time, supported him.

The meeting was summoned by Ned Bowling, who went around in his socks, so that he might not be heard, and the boys came in their socks, so that they might not be detected. The door was closed, and a general contribution of cotton dips being produced, they were fixed in different parts of the room, and the general effect was very brilliant.

The chair Harry sat upon was formed of five or six trunks piled up, and the general public sat or stood about on the floor. Many bore honorable scars gained in recent combats, and the boy who had been smitten by Chops had his head bound up. The name of this boy was James Bricks, popularly known as Jimmy Bricks.

He was a gifted boy this James Bricks, and was already a favorite in No. 1. He could sing, could Jimmy, and play on various instruments; he could beat out tunes on his cheeks, and at a break-down he had no rival in the place.

The boys talked in whispers, until Harry, tapping on the topmost trunks, called them to order and attention. A breathless stillness followed.

"Gentlemen," said Harry, "you have been called together this night for a purpose which I am sure will meet with our hearty sympathies."

"Hear—hear!" cried Ned Bowling.

"And before we proceed further," said Harry, "I think I must impress upon you that 'hear,

hears,' 'cheers,' and 'groans,' must not be uttered unless you confine yourselves to the lightest whisper. We have met this night to consider the situation."

"Hear—hear! Bravo!" went the whisper around, and both Ned Bowling and Jimmy Bricks rattled their stockinged feet upon the floor.

"First, then," said Harry, "let us take in the present aspect of the school. We all know that it was founded by Captain Timber."

"Long life to old Timber-toes," said Ned, and several of the listeners laughed.

"I have no objection to that sentiment," returned Harry. "The captain is a well meaning man. I trust that my noble friend on the right concurs in the sentiment also."

His noble friend, David Crusher, bowed, and Harry went on with his address. He spoke easily, and fluently, and to the point. Of such stuff are our orators made.

"With regard to the object of the captain," he said, "it read well on paper, and it pleased our parents, guardians and friends; but as soon as I came on board, I felt that it would not do—that it would not stand, and I think in this we are all agreed."

"Agreed!" said David Crusher.

"Agreed—agreed!" went the whisper around.

"But, as I have said before," continued Harry, "it will stand for a time—long enough to have what is dear to the heart of every British boy—a jolly good lark. Jimmy, you can practice that tune upon your chin when the meeting is over. 'Sally Come Up' in that form is rather distracting at present."

"Beg pardon, old fellow," said Jimmy, as he collapsed. "Comes natural, you know. I'm all music; can't help it."

"Here, anchored out of the reach of ordinary authority," said Harry, "and governed by a man who was letting us have our own way, everything promised well. David Jones was the first to interfere, but he saw it wouldn't do."

"He measured our strength, and quietly folded himself up," said David Crusher.

"Just so," replied Harry; "but, gentleman, it seems that we are not to have our own way. Another man in authority has come on board—a man who is armed with a truncheon."

"Yes, confound him!" muttered Bricks.

"A truncheon which he seems to be prepared to use in a very indiscriminate manner, and I vote, boys, that we don't stand it."

"Hurrah!" cried the boys.

"Silence, if you please," said Harry, "or we shall have him down. A paper has been sent to me. It is in the handwriting of the captain, and with your permission I will read it."

"Silence, there!" cried Ned Bowling, and Harry, holding the paper to the nearest cotton dip, read aloud:

"TO THE BOYS OF THE SCHOOL ON THE SEA.

"All lights to be put out sharp. All boys to go straight to bed. No singing or howling allowed; and every boy found wandering about after dark, or breaking any of these regulations, will be punished with the utmost rigor of the law.

(Signed) "INSPECTOR CHOPS."

The reading of this paper was followed by a whispered howl of derision, and Harry folded it up carefully.

"There, boys," he said, "so much for that lot. Now let us proceed to discuss it. First, then, who is Chops?"

"An ass."

"A drunken, broken-down bobby."

"A loafer."

"Well," said Harry, "it doesn't matter much who or what he is. What I propose is this—that we defy Chops."

"Hear—hear."

"That we make the best we can of Chops in the way of getting fun out of him."

"Hear—hear—that's the style—bravo."

"All who are for defying Chops hold up their hands."

Every hand was held up, and the motion was carried.

"Secondly," said Harry, "I have to propose that we do not put out the lights sharp—that we do not go to bed straight—that we do sing and howl if we like—and, lastly, if any of us want exercise before going to bed, that we take it; in short, that we laugh at Inspector Chops and all his rules. All who are in favor of this motion hold up their hands."

Up went every hand, and the second motion was duly carried.

"So far, so good," said Harry; "it only remains now for us to deal with this absurd docu-

ment. I propose it be submitted to the flames. A show of hands, if you please, gentlemen."

It was given, and David Crusher held a dip while Harry burned the paper. Rumpiling the ashes in his hand, he said:

"So much for Chops and his humbug. Now, gentlemen, I have only to warn you that this fun won't last very long—that, as soon as our friends hear how things stand, we shall be removed in a hurry, and I say that we had better make the best of our time—let us be merry while we can."

"Hear—hear—bravo!"

"We will have a musical evening, gentlemen," said Harry. "Now, Bricks, give us 'Old Bob Ridley' on the concertina. We will oblige you with the chorus."

"We shall sing in a whisper, I suppose," suggested Jerry Snivel.

"You can sing as you like," replied Harry, "and others can do the same."

"I am sure we shall get it hot for this," groaned Jerry; "it's very wrong."

"Put him near the door," said Harry, sternly, "or, rather put him outside, and let him go where he likes."

Jerry was glad to get away at any cost, and he rose to go. Bowling opened the door for him, and caught sight of Job and Jake running away.

"Halloo, you niggers," he cried, "come in here!"

"What for, Masser Bowling?" asked Jake; "what hab we done?"

"Who's that?" cried Harry.

"The two little niggers," replied Ned.

"Have them in," said Harry; "ask them to come and join the fun."

"Sure you not goin' to hurt de two lilly niggers, sar?" asked Jake, peeping in.

"No, come along," replied Harry, "we want you to sing, and when we come to the chorus you two little devils must howl like ten."

CHAPTER XI.

CHOPS HAS A NIGHT OF IT.

ABOUT an hour prior to this meeting, recorded in our last, Captain Timber announced to Beetles his intention to go ashore for an hour or two.

"I can take the cutter," he said, "and pull myself. I've got business ashore, and I may stop till the morning. Where's Chops?"

"He's havin' a wash, and will be here directly," replied Beetles.

A few moments afterwards Chops came in, much refreshed by his ablutions. He was greatly improved, having got the whole of his uniform on. Indeed, he looked quite official.

"Mister Chops," said Captain Timber, "I'm goin' ashore, and leave you in charge of the ship."

"Which I'm honored," replied Chops, "but I feels ekal to it."

"I rely on you, Chops. I trust you, and I make you responsible for the order of all on board. Maintain discipline. You've got the lock-up ready?"

"Yes—it's forrard, and a strong place it is."

"That's right, Chops; if there are any offenders, I'll try them in the morning."

"I'll have the indictments made out, sir," replied Chops, and the captain rose to go.

"Master," said Beetles, hoarsely, "come here."

"What for?"

"Come here—I wants to whisper in your ear," said Beetles.

Captain Timber came over and stooped, putting his ear to Beetles' lips.

"There's a man for you," whispered Beetles, indicating Chops; "ain't he a good 'un?"

"He is," said Captain Timber.

"Inwallyuble."

"So he is, Beetles."

"Could you get another like him for money?"

"I don't think I could, Beetles."

"He knows the law, he does, and he knows how to act on it, he do. You leave the ship to him, and you'll find it all right on the morrow. If you don't, blame me."

"No, I won't, Beetles, for I trusts him myself—I believes in him."

The captain took his departure quietly, so that his precious pupils might have no inkling of his going, but as he went down the side two little black heads peeped over, and four black eyes stared at him.

"What are you prying after?" he asked.

"Hear dat, Jake?" said Job; "de capen want to know what you am prying at."

"Do you hear me?" asked the captain.

"Jake," said Job, "de capen speak to you."

Captain Timber looked about for something to shy at that most trying Job, and found a ring-bolt. Before, however, he could take aim, the twins had disappeared.

"I've got everything wrong aboard here—except Chops," muttered Captain Timber, as he took his seat in the boat. "Mrs. Brown is always in tears, them two darkeys are very imps, Jones is a noodle, and Beetles ain't the man for navigation that I took him to be, but Chops is the right man in the right place. He maintains discipline."

How Chops maintained it we will now proceed to see.

He and Beetles, as soon as the captain was gone, proceeded to make arrangements for a festive night. His journey down, the various adventures on the way, the potations he had indulged in, all combined to bring him into a restless, feverish condition, which prompted him to seek further excitement.

He sought it in the society of Beetles.

"A little summat to drink and a little bacca to smoke is afore you," said Beetles, "so sit down and enjoy yourself. Fill my pipe and light it, then put it into my mouth. It will save me a world of trouble."

"But you manage wonderful," said Chops, as he proceeded to obey his friend. "Now, in drinking, the way you gets it to your mouth, one hook at the top, and t'other at the bottom, is downright miraculous."

"But I ain't so good as I used to be," sighed Beetles. "I've lost all my nerve."

"There's your pipe, Beetles, all a blowing and a-glowing."

"Thanky, Chops, you were allus a friend."

"And will be till I dies," said Chops, solemnly, and then they shook hands—or rather, hand and hook.

For awhile they smoked in silence—Beetles meditatively, Chops like one in full enjoyment of sweet content.

"Chops," said Beetles, suddenly, "I don't know what we should have done without you."

"Was things so bad?" asked Chops.

"Bad!" replied Beetles. "I should think they was. I was nowhere, the cap'en was nowhere, and that chap Jones was worse than nothing."

"Jones is the tutor?"

"Yes, reading and writing chap—not up to much."

"Where is he?"

"At present he ain't quite up to the sea, and goes to bed as soon as it is dark."

"What's that, Beetles?"

"I don't hear nothing."

"Oh, yes," said Chops, "it's somebody singing. Now there's a lot on 'em."

"That's the boys," exclaimed Beetles.

"So it is," returned Chops, calmly refilling his pipe. "They don't mind orders."

"Go down and stop 'em, Chops."

The face of Chops assumed a very sarcastic expression. Lighting a piece of paper he put it to his pipe, and whiffed vigorously.

"Do what, Beetles?"

"Go down and stop 'em."

"Much you knows about the h'action of the law," said Chops. "It ain't my duty to do it."

"Not your duty," gasped Beetles, "when you are engaged a purpose?"

"Beetles," said Chops, "listen to reason. When I was in the force it was my duty to stop a row, but only when the row came to me. If the row didn't come I didn't interfere, and them as was a fighting finished it off as they could. That's the movement of the law."

"Is it?" said Beetles. "Then I don't think it'll h'act here. There's a frightful row goin' on aboard, and if the cap'en was here he'd go off his head."

"That's his lookout," replied Chops. "I'm prepared to do my duty. If the row comes to me I'll stop it at once, and to please you, I'll prepare at once for action."

The sight of the truncheon dispelled all doubts on the part of Beetles. He felt that his friend would not fail in the hour of need. The hour of need was at hand, for the truncheon had barely touched the table when a knock was heard at the cabin door.

Beetles nearly slid from his chair, and only saved himself by hooking on the side of the table. Chops became sullen.

"Who's that?" he said.

"Don't know. Ask 'em to come in."

"Come in!" roared Chops, but the door opened not.

A second knock answered him.

"Beetles," he said, arising, "this is some o' them ere boys. Now, just see how I'll be down on 'em."

He stole softly to the door, and threw it open. Outside it was pitch dark, and nobody there.

"A runaway, Beetles," he said.

Then raising his voice, he said:

"You had better mind what you are up to. You don't know the man you are troubling with runaway knocks. You hear me?"

No answer. The night was calm and still—no sound but the heave and fall of a gentle sea. Chops felt he might venture to put his head out.

"Boys like you—" he began, when something very sticky was dabbed into his mouth, and he staggered back.

"Pah—pooh!" he sputtered. "I say, Beetles, is there anything in my mouth?"

"Yes, pitch," replied Beetles. "It was a mop. I see it."

"Look here, my lads," roared Chops, bellowing out at the darkness, "you had better be careful. You don't know what sort of man you are daubing about in the mouth with pitch. If you did you wouldn't do it."

Derisive laughter came from the darkness, and the mop was pitched in. It missed Chops, but it knocked down the rum bottle, and put the light out. The door was pulled to, and the sweet and soothing notes of an accordeon were heard.

"This," said Chops, "is a downright breach of the law."

"Stop it," returned Beetles.

"So I will," replied Chops, "but let me have a nip first."

He took a nip from the bottle, fixed his hat firmly on his head, grasped his truncheon, and prepared to sally forth.

"Keep your eye on me," he said; "mark how the law works when it's despised."

Beetles swung around on his chair, and faced the door; Chops stealthily approached as before, turned the handle, and rushed out.

He struck out in the most indiscriminate manner, and if any man, woman, boy, or girl, had been there he would have dashed their brains out, but he only found himself in the midst of a pile of buckets and tubs, which fell with an awful crash, carrying him with them.

He lay there sprawling, utterly aghast, the whole thing was so unexpected. Buckets to the right, buckets on every side. It seemed to him that he had got into the midst of more buckets than had ever been gathered together in one spot before.

Shrieks of laughter came from the surrounding darkness. Jubilant footsteps danced in ecstasy.

"All right, my lads," gasped Chops, "this is very good fun for you, but you don't know the man you've buried in buckets. If you did you wouldn't do such things."

"Hear dat, Jake?" said a voice from the darkness, and another voice replied:

"Yes, Job."

Chops struggled to his feet, and glared around him. The darkness was not so intense as it had been, and he could see dim forms moving around him.

"Come near, some of you, come within reach of the law," he gasped.

"Lock 'em all up—kill the villains!" cried a shrill voice from the fore-castle. "It's them niggers as is the worst." It was the voice of Mrs. Brown.

"Niggers or no niggers, I'll have some of 'em," muttered Chops; "but I must have another little nip first. The law requires nerving for such a case as this."

He, as the representative of the law, returned to the cabin, and took a nerver. It had not much effect, and he took another.

"Beetles," he said, "is this the usual game at night?"

"No," replied Beetles; "they seem to ha' developed; but go at 'em. Persevere."

"I'm a-goin'," said Chops, sitting down, "directly. My h'official duties are a little harder than I expected, which I hope the captain will consider in the wages."

"He'll consider it, Chops, if you enforce discipline," returned Beetles.

"I am a goin' to enforce it," replied Chops; "but enforcing requires nerves."

He took another nerver, and Beetles, who had all this time consistently kept him company in his drinks, did so likewise. Then a council of war was held.

"Rushing out is a bad game," said Chops; "it come heavy on the shins. Last time I got buckets, and Lord knows what they've piled up this time. Beetles, these breakers of the law require circumventing. We must put out the light."

Beetles had no objection; the light was extinguished, and Chops crept to the door, and noiselessly opened it. The darkness was not what it had been—his eyes were getting used to it—and

he could see that the enemy had flown. The buckets lay strewn about, but the boys were gone.

"Down below," muttered Chops; "but they'll come up again. I'll wait for 'em."

But first he stole back to the cabin, with a certain object which he did not reveal to Beetles. It was to get possession of the bottle, so that he might have a nip when required. His watch might be a long and weary one.

"Beetles," he whispered, "I think I shall have them now. I'm goin' to watch. Don't move for your life."

"What's that you are taking off the table?" demanded Beetles.

"Nothing," replied Chops.

"I thought I heered the bottle jingle."

"Oh, Beetles, you don't know the man I am, if you think I'd take that."

Beetles did not reply, and the deceitful Chops, with the bottle under his arm, stole forth to his post.

CHAPTER XII.

BEETLES EFFECTS AN ARREST.

It was the custom of Mr. David Jones to retire early—a fact we have before mentioned. He had a twofold object in this—to ease certain qualms which arose from the action of the sea, and to get out of the way of the boys.

In school they had hitherto been tolerably obedient to him, and performed their lessons creditably; but he had to wink at certain little practical jokes among themselves, and to shut his eyes to much that some masters would have readily condemned.

But Mr. Jones was wise in his generation. He saw who were the real masters of the situation, and he let them have their way; but he had already laid before Captain Timber a declaration to the effect that more help was needed, and without it the school could never go on with any prospect of success.

"I want two assistants, sir," he said, "and if you can get two muscular men, who will stand no nonsense, I think it will be all the better. There is a slumbering spirit in the boys, sir, which must be put down, or it will break into open rebellion. Twice to-day I have been smitten with peas."

"Smitten with what?" asked Captain Timber.

"Peas, sir—peas, from a shooter!" replied the tutor, "and one struck me in the most painful manner. I assure you it made me wince."

"You should have licked the chap that did it," said Captain Timber.

"I failed to perceive the culprit, sir. One pair of eyes is not enough for the school."

"Then you shall have more," said the captain.

With this object he had gone ashore, having previously written to an advertising agent to know if he could find two parties that were likely to suit him. Mr. Jones expressed himself much gratified, and promised, with additional assistance, to keep the school in perfect order.

There was another custom of Mr. Jones which we have not previously alluded to, and that was, he took a stroll on deck when all the ship was at rest. Mr. Jones was poetical in a small way—he had written verses—and in the dim light of night he gained inspiration from contemplating the sea—when it was not rough. The view from the deck of the *Heart of Oak* was a pretty one. The lights on shore found a reflection in every gently-heaving wave; the stars were multiplied a thousand times in the restless deep; sounds from the shore came softened down, and sounded musical to the ear—altogether the scene and the hour were favorable to the poetic mind.

It may also be added that Mr. Jones was in love—madly in love with a fair maid whose name was Matilda—and one of the great objects of his lifetime was to get a rhyme to her name. Hitherto he had failed; but hope was strong within him, especially on this night, when Chops lay on the watch.

Mr. Jones heard the rioting which had been going on, of course. He must have been dead or stone-deaf not to have done so; but it was no business of his, and if it had been, he certainly would have neglected it.

Mr. Jones felt that he would have to be stimulated with the prospect of a handsome reward to interfere with the festive proceedings of his pupils.

At last all was still, and Mr. Jones got out of his hammock, and slipped the most needful of his garments on.

"They sleep," he murmured. "The ship is at rest upon the mighty ocean!"

He looked out of the port-hole, and saw that the night was fine. The shore and the lights of

the town were on the other side, but he could faintly see their reflection upon the sea.

"Oh, Matilda!" he murmured, as he put on one slipper, "thine eyes are as stars, but what debars? That's good—stars and debars! Capital rhyme! I wonder where that other slipper is?"

After a little groping about, during which he involuntarily upset several steady old beetles who were taking their walks abroad, he found the second slipper, and put it on. Then he moved towards the door quietly, for, although he had hitherto been unmolested, he was not certain but that his turn might come.

He reached the passage—all still and dark. The boys had evidently retired. His mind was at ease, and he groped his way towards the staircase, thinking of Matilda.

"It's a difficult name to rhyme to," he muttered. "Matilda—Matilda is not a jilter. No, that won't do. Matilda—gild her! Ha-ha! Gild her—splendid! I've got it—"

The words yet lingered on his exultant lips when ten thousand stars shot out of his eyes, and he felt that the top of his head was beaten in. He tried to cry out, but his brain spun around—he staggered back, and rolled down the stairs.

"One!" said a voice above. "Arter that I'll have a nerver. Now, then, who's the next party that's goin' to defy the law?"

"I've not defied it," gasped Jones.

"You come up and tell me that to my face," said Chops. "Come on, I say."

Chops took a copious nerver, and prepared for the onslaught, but Jones, not knowing what it all meant, declined to come on.

"Who are you?" he asked, from the bottom of the stairs.

"Inspector Chops," was the reply.

"You've broken my head—you've half murdered me," groaned Jones.

"I meant to do it, and I'll do it again," replied the exultant Chops. "Don't move, or I'll be down on you."

Mr. Jones moved on with much celerity, and returned to his cabin, where he bolted himself in, and tied up his aching head, vowing that he would have vengeance on the morrow. He was resolved to fight Chops if he would abandon his official truncheon.

"Really," he groaned, "it was a most painful blow—a bitter blow; right on the part where the hair is thin. He must be drunk."

Chops was not drunk, but he was well on the way, and the frequency of his nips promised to bring him to that condition. He was disturbed no more that night by them below, but he kept watch, and stuck to the bottle.

Beetles spent the night alone, dozing, and occasionally hailing up to ask Chops to return, and bring the bottle. Chops did not reply—he only chuckled, and took more nervers. At last he fell asleep, and lay with his head on his truncheon in a state of rather troubled repose.

It was very trying to Beetles, to be robbed of his drink, and it made him very savage; but he dare not venture out of the cabin in the dark with so many things lying about. The light was extinguished, and if even he knew where it was, which he did not, it would have been out of his power to relight it.

"It's mean and low of Chops," he muttered. "Mean an' uncommon low; besides, it ain't h'official going on duty with a bottle o' rum. I say, Chops."

A deep nasal sound answered him. Chops was, indeed, asleep.

Beetles expressed his fury in language more forcible than polite, and then once more sought repose. Swinging around he laid his head upon the table and went off.

The morning broke dull and cold. Across the sky was a dull sheet of leaden cloud—on every side it threatened rain. Harry Fitzroy announced this cheerful prospect to the rest, who although awake, still lay snugly in their hammocks.

"I hate wet weather," said Gerard Warren. "It makes a fellow feel so damp."

"Wet or dry it's all the same to I," sang Jimmy Bricks.

"Give us a song," said Ned Bowling.

"What!" returned Bricks. "So early in the morning?"

"Yes," said Ned, deliberately misunderstanding him; "that will do."

"But I didn't mean the song; I—"

"Strike up, Bricks!" cried Harry, springing into his hammock; "it is never too early to sing."

Bricks, nothing loth, struck up, and the chorus was beautifully supported.

The sound reached the other dormitories, and the strain was taken up with an energy that promised well on the coming day.

Mr. David Jones, lying in his hammock, with a bandage around his head, heard the chorus of sweet voices, and muttered an anathema upon singing in general. He had passed a bad night and wanted sleep, but he could not get it. The remorseless strain went on.

"If I had my will I'd keep every boy in a straight waistcoat until he was a full-grown man," muttered the tutor. "Oh, now they've stopped. No; it is only to get breath. They are at it again. I can't and won't stand it!"

He jumped out and ran to the door, and opened it, but then, with wonderful prudence, he contented himself with stopping, and shouting:

"Be quiet there, will you?"

"Now massa's dead and gone to rest,
Of all de massas he wor de best."

• sang Bricks, in an audible voice.

"I'll put some of you to rest," muttered the tutor. "I wish I had a hatchet, or a tomahawk, or a bombshell to throw in the midst of you. Oh, confound it! The chorus again. Will you be quiet there?"

"Will you be quiet?" asked the voice of Chops, as its owner, in a very bilious and irritable state of mind, came stumbling down the companion. "Go to bed again, or I'll run yer in."

"I warn you, sir," said the excited tutor, "to cease from your illegal and unwarrantable doings. Last night you struck me with something heavy—a weapon prohibited by law, I believe—"

"I'll fetch you another with it," muttered Chops, groping in his coat-tail pocket. "Hang it, where's the weapon of the law? I'll tell you what, young man, you don't know who you are talking to. You don't know the man that you are defying; if you did you wouldn't do it. I'll run you in. Confound it! Where is it?"

"You run me in," cried the excited tutor. "You—you. Scoundrel, what do you mean? First of all you strike me a blow—a heavy blow on the head."

"You shouldn't come prowling about my beat then," said Chops.

"Your beat?"

"Yes. I've got orders to keep it clear. Dash it! Where is it? But never mind, I can run him in without it."

Chops charged at the tutor, who rapidly closed the door and bolted it. Chops dashed himself furiously against it, and Mr. Jones, cold with fear, piled everything in the cabin against it.

"The man's mad!" he gasped, "stark, staring mad! So is that Beetles—so are the boys—so is that old ass, Timber! I'm in Colney Hatch upon thesea, I am, and if things don't change I shall be mad, too. Oh, Matilda, if you could look on your loving Davy at this moment, your little heart would break."

Outside, Chops was in a very savage condition. He had passed a most uncomfortable night, and had been disturbed just when there was a fair prospect of getting a little repose. The thirst for activity, so common among policemen, was upon him, and he was eager to run somebody in.

But who?

Jones had made his fortress impregnable, and only the boys were left. It was dangerous to attack them in a body—but stay; could he not open the door of No. 1 dormitory, seize upon the nearest boy, and carry him into captivity before the others had recovered from their surprise?

It was a happy thought—a great thought—a noble thought—well worthy of the great intellect that conceived it, and all it wanted to make it perfect was the carrying out. If Chops was not the man to do it, who could be?

He opened the door of No. 1 dormitory and put one foot in. But they were not unprepared for him. A can of water was expertly tossed over him, and blinded and drenched he staggered back.

"You'll be sorry for this," he gasped. "Some of you don't know the man you've chucked water over. If you did you could not possibly do it. Oh! you are a nice lot. Come out and let me have a chance of running you in!"

He made that appeal in vain, and in a very savage mood returned to the deck. He stood there alone, like Casabianca, and mused.

"The troubles of an h'official life," he said, "is wvarious. Boys is the principal h'items, and here they seem to be everything. They've got no respect for the law, nor—"

Bang came a strong hand in the middle of his back; he staggered forward, and fell upon his hands and knees. A yell of laughter saluted his ears, and he became aware of his youthful enemies dancing about him.

He got upon his feet and felt hurriedly in his tail-coat pocket, but what he sought was not there. It had rolled to the side when he awoke in the morning, forgetting that he had used it for a pillow.

"Oh! if I could only find it," he gasped, as Ned Bowling rushed in and favored him with another smack, "just to have one crack at 'em. One crack is all I ax for."

"This is a pretty scene!" bawled Beetles, as he stumped out of his cabin. "Do you call this keeping order?"

Beetles was in a very bad frame of mind, too. He had been robbed of his drink. He had been treated unfairly by Chops.

"You mind your own business," replied Chops. "Don't you interfere with the laws."

"Where is it?" asked Beetles, sarcastically. "I don't see no law."

"Here's the law," said Chops, striking his breast. "I'm the law."

"You!" said Beetles. "Get out."

"Now, mind this," said Chops; "yucan't insult me with compunity."

"Pooch—rubbish—who are you?" said Beetles. "A h'ass of a man."

This was more than a man accustomed to exercise authority could bear. All old friendship was cast aside, all love and brotherhood scattered to the winds. Chops resolved to run Beetles in.

"Come on," he said, seizing the old tar by the collar. "I'll vindicate the law!"

"Avast, I say!" cried Beetles, as the other ran him forward. "Avast!"

But Chops, blind with fury, heeded not. He had the strength of three men for the moment, and he dragged Beetles across the deck like a child.

The spectators of this scene were in a state of unqualified delight, and urged Chops with cheers to do his duty.

His prison-house was under the fore-castle, and into it he bundled Beetles, and thrust the key into the lock.

"Now," he said, "where's the law?"

Somebody jerked him behind, and he, too, was shot in right over Beetles, the door was closed and locked, and an exultant hurrah went over the sea.

There was a little window about the size of the aperture of a bathing-machine, close to the door, and at this Chop's face speedily appeared.

"Look here, my lads," he cried, "this won't do. You can't lock up the law. You don't know the man that you've shoved into this hole; if you did, you dare not do it. Open, my lads! The law calls on you to open the door."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW USHERS.

THERE was one amazed spectator of the scene we have just described, and that was Captain Timber. He had done his business on shore over night, and returning early in the morning, arrived on deck just in time to see the representative of the law drag Beetles to the lock-up, and get incarcerated himself.

The captain was too amazed to interfere, and, like a statue, he stood staring until the trick was done, and Harry Fitzroy was making off with the key; then he spoke, or rather roared, in a tone of voice that made Jerry Snivel jump out of his boots.

"Stand by!"

The boys drew up, and now perceiving him for the first time, saluted.

"Fall in," he bellowed.

They fell in, and stood as mute as mice, wondering what was coming next. He took off his hat, and felt in the lining, producing after a diligent search the articles, which had been drawn up, and duly signed.

"Now, my lads," he said, "you know what these are?"

"Yes, sir," replied a chorus of voices.

"But it appears that you've forgotten what they are," he returned; "and so, by your leave, I'll just read 'em through. Silence fore and aft!"

The boys were quiet enough, but a scuffle seemed to be going on somewhere forward, in the cooking department probably, for the voice of Mrs. Brown was heard addressing Job and Jake.

"I will have no more of it. Come out of that cupboard, Jake."

"Hear dat, Jake!" said the voice of Job.

"Come out ob dat cupboard right orf."

"Hold your tongue! You are as bad," cried Mrs. Brown. "Take your fingers out of that jam-pot."

"You ain't got no bisness to make jam tarts for yourself when noborry else got none," retorted Job.

"If de cap'en know dat, dere be a precious bobbery," added Jake.

"Oh, let me get at you!" said Mrs. Brown. "Let me only get hold of one of you!"

A short and brilliant chase was then heard—a plate was broken, and Job and Jake commenced squeaking.

"Keep at an anchor a bit, my lads," said the captain. "I'll stop this!"

The kitchen was a sort of large shanty on the fore-castle, erected for the purpose of cooking and giving Mrs. Brown a private apartment. Towards this structure the captain started, and threw open the door.

As he did so, Job and Jake came rushing out. One went under his arm, the other between his legs, and a jam-pot from the gentle hand of Mrs. Brown smote him on the breast.

"Halloo!" he roared, "what's in the wind?"

Mrs. Brown did not answer, but closed the door with a bang, and bolted it. He knocked, but got no answer, and retired, blue with passion.

"This ain't discipline," he growled, "but I'll have it maintained. Where are them cursed niggers?"

The cursed niggers had both disappeared, and none of the boys seemed to know where they were gone. Captain Timber shook his fist at the empty air, refolded the ship's articles, and returned them to his hat.

"There'll soon be an end to this," he said. "Here, come up, both of you."

The latter remark was spoken over the side, and addressed to some persons who were in a boat below. In response, a hoarse voice replied:

"All right, master. Come on, Bantam."

Then two big, burly forms came up the side, and stood upon the deck before the boys; they were beetle-browed men, with smooth faces, and close-cropped hair, and thick lips, and a general air of being constantly in training about them. One had a black eye, and the other a slit nose.

"The Game Bantam and the Turnham Tickler, gentlemen," said Captain Timber, introducing them. "They are come to assist in the school, and try to maintain discipline."

"Here's a go," whispered Harry to Gerard Warren, and a shudder went down the line. Ned Bowling closed one eye and whistled.

"I guess," he said, "we shall have some hard knocks about now."

"Where's Mr. Jones?" asked Captain Timber.

"Not up yet, sir," replied Jerry Snivel.

"Go and call him."

"I say," cried the voice of Chops from the little window of the lock-up, "how long are you going to keep the law locked up? You've no right to keep such a mighty engine confined. If you knew the law you wouldn't do it."

Chops could not see much of what was going on outside, and he was entirely ignorant of the captain's presence. Sounds from the outside, too, were but imperfectly heard by him, and when Captain Timber told him to "stand by," he answered with a threat.

"I'll stand by yer," he said, "when I get out. I'll run you in, you warmin't! Here, you let me out."

He thrust his arm through the hole, and exhibited a clenched fist. Captain Timber took up a mop-stick, and gave him one over the knuckles that made him howl. Chops retired, and was heard no more.

Mr. Jones, summoned by Jerry Snivel, now appeared, with his head bound up, and such an expression of face, that the Game Bantam and the Turnham Tickler laughed, gruffly, and the boys shrieked in ecstasy.

"Why, what's the matter with you?" asked Captain Timber.

"I've been assaulted violently by Chops," replied the usher, "struck on the head with his club—truncheon, I mean."

"You should have dodged it and let out with your left," suggested the Bantam.

Mr. Jones sighed, and shook his head. He did not understand what the Bantam meant, and he was too weak to ask questions. The loss of blood had been considerable, and all that night he had slept scarce a wink.

"What with you, my lads, and what with Beetles and Chops," said Captain Timber, "I'm nigh drove mad; but I'll have discipline maintained somehow or somewhere. Now take your exercise; but first, where's the key?"

Harry took it out of his pocket and handed it over, and Captain Timber thrust it into his pocket, and walked off to his cabin, leaving Beetles and Chops still in confinement.

The boys gathered around the two pugilists, who seemed to be good-natured fellows enough. They looked at the boys with a critical eye, and whispered comments upon them to each other.

"That chap," said the Bantam, pointing to Ned Bowling, "would make a fast-rate light weight. He's got good fives, although they're small, and he stands well on his pins."

"I like that chap," returned the Tickler, indicating Harry Fitzroy. "He'd make a useful man if nussed well."

"There's a chap," said the Bantam, enthusiastically, looking at David Crusher; "he's got the lines of an ox."

"Yes," said the Bantam, "but not the pluck. I'll back t'other one."

Mr. Jones had retired during these whispered criticisms, and the boys were left with the pugilists. They were at once put under examination.

"I say," said Harry, "what are you fellows engaged for?"

"To help you with your h'edication," replied the Bantam, with a grin.

"And to keep h'order," added the Tickler.

"How?" said Harry.

"Well, my lad," said the Bantam, "that's left to us, but h'order we must keep."

"But surely you wouldn't knock boys about?"

An expression of angelic dissent passed over the face of the Bantam, and smiting the palm of the left hand with his right fist, he exclaimed:

"Never, so help me!"

"Tain't in our line," added the Tickler.

"Me and Tickler," continued the Bantam, "have fot many a fight, but we've allus fot fair, and we never gave a foul blow. We've fot together for money, and we went straight through it. We got one wictory each, and the final bout is to come orf some day, and we have never been anything but friends. Have we, Tickler?"

"Never," answered Tickler, sepulchrally.

"We are men," the Bantam went on, "and we've fot like men. We never lifted our hands in a street row, or a public-house tit-up, although we've been cheeked and chaffed and 'struck by mad h'asses, as didn't know no better, a hundred times!"

"We have," confirmed Tickler.

"And why haven't we struck out at 'em?" asked the Game Bantam.

"Ah! why!" echoed the Turnham Tickler.

"Acause," said the Bantam, "we knows our strength. We knows that few men could stand up ten seconds afore us, and we knows that we could lick a dozen of 'em if we liked. That's enough for us. We don't want to knock men about to prove it. Let 'em, if they want to fight, put their money down, and name their referee—that's wot we says."

"And we've allus said it," growled the Tickler.

"So you see, my lads," said the Bantam, "that if we don't knock men about, we ain't likely to knock boys about. But I'll tell you what we'll do. Me and the Tickler will teach you how to fight. We'll show you the nateral use of your fists, and how much can be made on 'em in a fair and manly way."

"I'll tell you what you are," said Harry, "you are a pair of bricks."

"So they are!" chorused the rest.

"Give them three cheers, boys!"

The cheers were given, and the Bantam and Tickler exchanged gratified smiles.

"I say, Tickler," whispered the Bantam, "they are a nice lot o' youngsters, and I wotes that we stand by 'em."

"So we will," returned the Tickler, and the thing was as good as signed and sealed.

CHAPTER XIV.

A LITTLE SPARRING.

CHOPS and Beetles in confinement did not find that a sorrow shared by two became much lighter; on the contrary, they made it heavier by a free exchange of reproaches and recriminations.

"It's all your fault, Beetles," said Chops; "you would exasperate the law."

"Who's the law?" asked Beetles.

"I am," replied Chops.

"You!" exclaimed Beetles, and expressed the depth of his contempt by spitting on the floor.

Chops got upon stilts at once.

"Look here, Beetles," he said, "I've been a friend to you."

"You a friend to me," asked Beetles. "Let me ax you, when and where?"

"Do you remember that night at Peckham when we were in the Green Lion?" asked Chops.

"No, I don't."

"Then let me tell you that it was the night when you gave a wery inoffensive party as kept a tripe-shop a dig in the ribs with your crutch, and we both on us got out quick, leaving him pale and pallid on the floor."

"Did we?"

"Yes, Beetles, we did; and afore we was half-way down the street that party recovered, and came out in pursoot. You knows that."

"No, I don't," replied Beetles, obstinately.

"Didn't I take you up on my back, and run down the street?"

"No, you didn't."

"Did I meanly and basely desert you, and run home alone?"

"Yes, you did."

"Lord!" exclaimed Chops, clasping his hands together, "what a liar the man is."

"Don't you call me a liar," cried Beetles, and dexterously raising a crutch he caught Chops on the nose, and sent him staggering into the corner.

"Wot's that for?" gasped Chops.

"Get up," cried Beetles, "and I'll give you the t'other crutch. Get up."

Chops prudently declined to get up, and felt for his truncheon, and of course did not find it. Searching for that weapon was an instinct with him.

"Look here, Beetles," he said, softly, "let's be friends, as we used to be."

"Friends be blowed!" replied Beetles. "Don't you get up. Stand by."

Chops sighed, and made himself comfortable in the corner.

"It's no use quarreling with cripples," he murmured, "specially violent cripples. They don't know the powerful h'engine the law is, and they don't know the man who works it."

"Who are you calling a cripple?" asked Beetles.

"Nobody," replied Chops; "I never even thought of such a thing."

"That's a good job. If you had meant me, I would have shown you if I was one."

Not another word was exchanged between them, until an hour later, when Captain Timber came to let them out. He opened the door, and came in without speaking. Chops, humbled and penitent, looked at him askance.

Captain Timber signalled for them to go forth, and they went, Chops first. The deck was clear of all but Job and Jake, who were cleaning pots and pans. Both gave a gaping chuckle as Chops went by, but he ignored them in a dignified manner.

The captain passed on to the cabin occupied by Beetles, to whom he signaled to sit down. Beetles took his bearings a little better than usual, but he was not quite successful. For one moment he kept his seat, then the chair shot from under him, and the *Heart of Oak* quivered all over.

"It's my eyesight," he gasped, "it must be—I'm deluded."

Captain Timber passed him by on the other side, and Chops did likewise, and Beetles, left to his own resources, hooked on to the table, and dragged himself up. Captain Timber walked through into his own cabin, and beckoned Chops to follow.

Once there, he closed the door, and folding his arms, took a long and steady look at the crest-fallen Chops.

"Look at me, sir," he said, at last.

Chops did his best, but he looked exceedingly sheepish, and Captain Timber gave a grunt of disdain.

"May I ask," he said, "in what part of England you served in the force?"

The question acted upon Chops as a pin properly applied might have done. He started, and colored like a peony.

"I served," he replied, "in the force ginerally."

"Oh," said Captain Timber, with a cool, sarcastic air. "Then you did not serve any partickler city, town or borough."

"No, sir, I was a ginerall inspector."

Captain Timber turned around and clasped his hands together, as if making an effort to control himself. A silence ensued, Chops watching him narrowly and anxiously. Suddenly the captain turned and addressed him.

"Chops," he said, "you are a confounded impostor."

"Me an impostor?" repeated Chops, incredulously. "Me, as have stood up for the law a'most from infancy; me, as have been in the law since I could run alone. Wasn't my father in the force afore me, and wasn't my mother a she detective?"

"It don't matter what they were," said Captain Timber, waving his arm, "you ain't up to much, you ain't up to anything. Get out."

"Which," murmured Chops, "as I haven't had a chance. was took aback by the sudden rebellion as come over us, and—"

"Get out!" roared Captain Timber, seizing hold of a chair, and Chops beat a precipitate retreat.

When he was gone the old seaman sat sorrowfully down. His project threatened to be a failure, and all the money he had spent had been cast away in vain. The boys rebellious, Beetles helpless, Chops worse than useless, and his tutor a nonentity. It was indeed sad, and he could have wept if he had thought tears consistent with manhood. Only one source of comfort remained to him in the form of the Game Bantam and the Turnham Tickler.

"They'll do it," he muttered, "and if they can't nobody will. If they fail the school must be given up. Given up!" he cried, starting to his feet—"given up by me as never turned my back upon the guns of an enemy—no, never! I'll carry it out; I'll make sailors of these lads, or I'll blow the whole thing, them, myself, and the *Heart of Oak* into the clouds!"

The bare fact of making a resolve stimulates most men, and he arose to feel more cheery. After taking a little rum and water and a biscuit standing, he went out—passing Beetles asleep on the way—and found that morning lessons were over.

The boys had formed a circle and were watching the Bantam and Tickler, who were favoring them with an illustration of the art of sparring, and the way that they fenced, feinted, dodged, and tapped each other brought forth rounds of applause—even Mr. Jones, standing in the background, was in a state of rapture.

Captain Timber joined the usher and looked on, too. Sparring was a new thing to him; he felt interested, and applauded with the rest.

"Very pretty sport," he said.

"And very harmless," replied Mr. Jones, enthusiastically. "The gloves are soft, and it is impossible to hurt each other. It will be a splendid exercise for the boys."

"So it will," said the captain. "What are the gloves stuffed with?"

"Wool, sir."

"I shouldn't mind having a go in myself," mused the old man. "Look at that—a tap on the nose as light as a feather. Bravo—good—clever—very clever—I'll be shot if it ain't!"

The Bantam and Tickler finished the round and paused for breath, receiving with professional modesty the hailstorm of applause from the spectators. Captain Timber pushed his way through the ring and felt the gloves.

"Very soft," he said.

"Yes," replied the Bantam; "me and Tickler took the stiffness out long ago."

"I should like to have a round," said Timber.

"You wouldn't be no use to either of us," replied Bantam. "Have a go in with the school-master."

"So I will, by Jingo," returned the captain. "Come on, Jones."

The usher seemed to be rather diffident about exhibiting in public, and murmured something about having a little practice in private, but the Bantam took him in hand and fixed the gloves on—the Tickler performing the same office for Captain Timber.

"How do you hold them?" asked Jones, who had a feeling of general sinking pervading his manly frame.

"Guard your face and your ribs," replied the Bantam, "and keep your left advanced. Don't be in a hurry, but land the first moment you see an opening."

"Oh! yes, just so," said Jones, who knew a little less than he did before.

"And don't be vicious," said the Bantam. "Remember that it's only play."

"I will," replied Jones, but in his heart he fancied it was rather a serious business.

Captain Timber was hot and eager to begin, and here we may say that he was an exceedingly muscular man, with muscles like ropes, and had been so blessed from his youth up. He and Jones faced each other, and the delighted boys formed a circle as before.

The Bantam and Tickler regarded the attitudes of their novices with a curious eye, and the Bantam was heard to mutter between his teeth: "Well, I'm blessed!" but he was a phlegmatic man, and let them go on.

The Tickler, with folded arms, likewise awaited the issue.

The captain, with his left arm held horizontally across his face, and his right lying in wait under it ready to deliver a blow, advanced upon Jones, who slowly retreated. He was bent upon pursuing cautious tactics, but his guard was somewhat defective, and there was at least two

feet between his two fists, and he rather presented the appearance of one offering to receive the captain into his brotherly arms than that of a man bent upon pugilism.

The fight was short and sweet, and if it had been reported in a sporting paper, it would have been thus described:

"ROUND THE FIRST AND LAST.—Both novices came up to the scratch amid the cheers of their supporters. The captain looked determined and bent on forcing the fighting, but Jones was playing the feinting game. Both went around the ring twice, when Jones being suddenly troubled with a sneeze, the captain rushed in and landed him heavily on the conk with the right, delivering one at the same moment in the bread-basket with his left. Jones went heavily to grass, with his face covered with the ruby. The well-known Turnham Tickler, who ably supported Jones, rushed at his man and got him in his corner, when he did all that could be done to bring him up to time, but he was settled and done for, and the sponge was thrown up in the favor of the captain, who retired from the ring, followed by the hearty cheers of his supporters."

In our own language, we beg to describe the fight in this way:

Captain Timber followed Jones around the ring until the latter, who had been troubled with a cold ever since he came on board, had the misfortune to sneeze. This pulled him up for a moment and brought him within reach of the captain, who gave him two blows, either of which might have felled an ox—one on the nose, and the other in the ribs—and hurled him down on the flat of his back.

The Tickler, with great alacrity, picked him up and found that he was insensible, and dragged him on one side, signaling to the Bantam to get some water. A bucket being handy, some was poured over the insensible Jones, who opened his eyes, and exclaimed:

"Where am I? What was it? Am I dead?"

"You've got the first knock down blow," replied the Tickler, gruffly, "and fust blood goes down to the captain. Time's up. Go in and jib him all over. One under the chin is what he wants."

"Dear me," moaned Jones, "this is, indeed, painful; my nose aches, and it seems double the size."

"You ain't in training," returned the Tickler, "and it's swelled a bit; but go in and land him on the chin."

"I can't fight any more," said Jones; "I had no idea the gloves were so hard."

"Up with the sponge, Bantam," said the Tickler in disgust; "he ain't got a feather of the game-cock in him. Get up on your feet, master."

"My nose is exceedingly painful," murmured Mr. Jones; "I do not call this play; it was a very vicious blow. Oh! dear me! I never felt any thing like it. Every bone is broken, I believe!"

"Get some vinegar and brown paper, and bind him up," suggested the Tickler.

Mr. Jones did not reply, but slowly and painfully left the deck. Captain Timber, with a glowing face, had the gloves removed, and walked proudly back to his cabin. In those two blows he had let off a deal of pent-up steam, and he was in a happy frame of mind again.

Harry Fitzroy, in the name of the rest, thanked the Bantam and Tickler for the great treat they had given them that morning, and expressed a hope that they would soon have another display.

"This is poor work," replied the Bantam; "nothing to a reg'lar evening with my old pals; that's fun, if you like; there's one coming off at the Nobbly Arms—Jim Crippler's place, to-night, that would be worth seeing."

"Who is Jim Crippler?" asked David Crusher.

"He's champion of the light weights, and he might be champion of the heavies, if he only went in for it."

David Crusher fell a thinking, and there was a longing in his face which he did not then give vent to. Later on he held a conference with Harry, and the result was that they both asked the Bantam for the favor of a private interview.

It was readily granted, and Harry laid their wishes before him.

"We want," he said, "to go to Jim Crippler's to-night."

"No use," replied the Bantam, shaking his head. "Why, they wouldn't let you in."

"Not if you went with us?"

"Oh! in course; but I'm bound by what the cap'n calls his articles to remain on board."

"So are we," said Harry; "but bother his articles! We can go ashore, and nobody be any

the wiser. As soon as it is dark we can borrow a boat, and pull ashore; we can return at any time."

The Bantam shook his head, but the shake was not decided, and Harry pressed him to go.

"How many will there be, then?" he asked.

"Four or five, at the outside."

"Will the rest keep square?"

"You may rely upon them, one and all," replied Harry.

"Well, I'll see the Tickler, and hear what he says 'bout it."

The Tickler was seen, and he fell in readily with the proposition. Already he was missing the society he had been accustomed to, and if the thing could be managed quietly, he would like it above all things in the world.

"We shall be ready at nine o'clock," said Harry, "and you can leave the management of the boat to me."

CHAPTER XV.

TAKING FRENCH LEAVE.

"Now, Crusher," said Harry, "who shall we take with us? For my own part, I want Warren, Bowling and Bricks to go."

"I don't know that I want anybody," replied David, "unless it is Snivel."

"Snivel!" exclaimed Harry. "What makes you think of taking him?"

"He'll peach if we don't—either from funk or malice."

"I think you are right. That makes six of us, and with Bantam and the Tickler, it will be eight—a nice number for a gig. She's fastened to the martingale, afloat; but I can easily slip up the jibboom, and drop into her, and bring her around."

"Mind you don't drop into the sea."

"I'll take care of that, and if I do it's only the matter of a swim."

"Are you a great gun at it?"

"I could go to the shore if so inclined."

"I wish I could," sighed David. "I am an awful muff at it."

"Now we must settle upon a place of meeting—I think by the mainmast, as soon as it is dark."

"A capital plan. We shall want a lantern for the boat."

"I have a bull's-eye of my own," replied Harry. "I will have it trimmed and ready."

"Right you are."

These two boys were on the way to become fast friends. Their acquaintance had begun with dislike, leading to a fight; and now it was unexpectedly ripening into friendship. There was nothing new in that—thousands of friendships have begun in the same way. The feeling of dislike with which Harry first looked upon David was the instinctive recognition of a rival, and David's tacit acknowledgment of a superior wiped away all dislike and mistrust, and bound them together.

Their going could not be kept a secret from the school, so a quiet meeting was held below, and one and all were called on to give a pledge to keep the secret.

"You shall know all about it when we come back," said Harry. "We can't all go, you know; but when we have other expeditions—and I trust we shall have—we can take you all by turns."

"Gerard Warren, Ned Bowling, and Jemmy Bricks were delighted with the idea of going—it was an unexpected pleasure—and they thanked Harry and David heartily. Jerry Snivel said he would remain on board."

"And I would rather that you come with me," said David; and Jerry gave in to the master mind.

Night came on too slowly, but it came at last, and quietude reigned on board. There was none of the usual shouting below—a state of things which charmed Captain Timber, and, followed so closely upon his pugilistic success, made him serenely happy. He invited Beetles into his cabin and brought out the grog.

"Beetles," he said, "we've got into the right track at last. We've got the two right men on board and we'll drink their healths."

"We will," replied Beetles, who, being somewhat parched, was ready to drink the health of anything or anybody.

"Here's to 'em," said the captain—"the Game Bantam and the Turnham Tickler."

The health of these worthies was drank with much enthusiasm, so much, indeed, that none of the grog was left.

The captain was brewing some more, when the door of his cabin was burst open, and Chops came tumbling in.

"Oh, Lord," he gasped, "here's a go."

"Are you drunk again?" asked Captain Timber, sternly.

"Oh, no, I ain't; not all this day have I had a drop of anything, but the wash Mrs. Brown calls tea. But, oh, here's a breaking of the law of order."

"Out with it, Chops, where are you sailing to?" said Beetles.

"They've gone," gasped Chops.

"Gone where?" cried the captain.

"Them two fighting chaps—the Bantam and the Tickler."

"Gone!" said Captain Timber, sinking into a chair, and staring straight ahead.

"Yes, in a boat, and I saw them with my own eyes."

"Gone, deserted," muttered Captain Timber, "left the old ship when she needed 'em most."

"I don't think that they've exactly deserted," said Chops; "in my opinion they've taken the boys on shore for a spree."

"Boys—what boys?"

"Five on 'em. I counted 'em as they got into the boat."

"And couldn't you come to me with this afore?" cried Captain Timber.

"It fetched me all on a heap," replied Chops, "but give me a chance, let me go and bring 'em back. I'll do it."

"You do it?"

"Yes, I'll stake my reputation in the force on it. You don't know the man I am, or you wouldn't doubt me. Let me go ashore for 'em."

"I'll take you ashore," said the captain, "I'll pull you ashore and wait until you find 'em. Mind, if you don't do it, I'll kick you out of the boat if you put a foot into it."

"I'll do it," said Chops, who certainly smelled of something stronger than tea. "Give me a chance, and let me show you the power of the law."

"Done, then," said Captain Timber.

"And suppose, while you are gone, the t'other boys should bust out," said Beetles.

"Let 'em bust," replied Captain Timber; "they can't be much worse than they have been."

"Suppose they fire the ship?"

"Let 'em burn," said the captain, eagerly. "I don't care."

"But, suppose they burn me," urged Beetles.

"It is as comfortable a death as you could expect," replied the captain, as he walked out.

Chops followed, and took the oars in his hands.

"Trim the boat, will you?" he growled.

"Do what, sir?" asked Chops.

"Sit in the middle, you land lubber!"

"Oh, yes! I understand—but here's a chance—here's an opportunity for asserting the power of the law. They'll find out to-night what a mighty h'engine it is. I've got the h'instinct hard in me to-night. I'll go straight at 'em."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NOBBLY ARMS.

THE Nobbly Arms, kept by Jim Crippler, was in every way a house of the fancy. It was there that all the dog-fanciers, pigeon-dealers, pugilists, and other men of the class assembled.

If you wanted to know where to get a good dog, you went to Jim Crippler's; if you wanted to know about a stolen one, you inquired at Jim Crippler's, and all who loved a sparring match went there, too, and had good fun for their money.

One thing, however, Jim would not encourage, and that was a ratting match. Those who were fond of that debasing pastime had to go elsewhere for it.

"It goes agin my nature," Jim used to say, "to look upon a lot o' miserable warmints, and let the dog at 'em. They ain't got no chance—they ain't got no run for their money, and every warmint ought to have that."

People respected Jim, for he was honest and manly, and never allowed any bullying in his house. As for a man who had ever been tried and convicted of unfairly beating or maiming a fellow-man, he had much better have put his nose between the bars of a tiger-cage than poke it inside Jim's house. Jim was good for flattening that nose—he was, and Jim did hit uncommon hard, to be sure.

On the night of his sparring a very numerous company assembled in a shed at the back of his house, a place devoted to the fistic art and occasionally skittles. There was a raised platform in the center, roped around and sawdusted, ready for the combatants. Jim was in sparring attire, and at the appointed time, eight o'clock, he got upon the platform.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the first set-to is atween—is between—the Spicy Tanner and the Corky Tinman!"

The pair named were working men, and appeared in corduroy trousers. They knew something of sparring, but slogging was their forte, and they hammered each other unmercifully to the great delight of the lookers-on. The Corky Tinman speedily got knocked out of time, and the Spicy Tanner was rewarded with a shower of coppers, which he collected in his cap, and generously shared with his late antagonist.

Then Jim Crippler got upon the platform again, apparently very much embarrassed. He was never a fluent speaker, but he generally managed to find a few words for most occasions. Now he was, to use his own expression, downright flummoxed and floored.

He stood, shifted his feet about, and rubbed his hands until some friends in the front rank bawled out:

"What's up, Jim? Out with it."

"Well, gentlemen," said Jim, "it's just this way. When I got up this eve—evenin's entertainment, I says to the Bantam and Tickler—says I, 'You'll both come, won't you, and show 'em what you can do,' when they says to me, says they, 'We will; so I put their name in the bill, and they ain't here.'"

"Why not?" asked a man who had been resting his chin on the platform.

"They've gone clean off," replied Jim; "clean cut and run, and nobody don't know nuffin about 'em. I've sent down to their lodgings, and the people says as they've gone with everything."

"They've sold you—"

"That's a lie!" said a voice at the back, and the Bantam, followed by Tickler and the boys, pushed their way to the front. Jim Crippler jumped down, and when their hands met, a pewter pot between would have come to grief.

"I knowed, Bantam," said Jim, "that you'd never voluntarily sell me!"

"Who says I would?" asked Bantam.

"Cheesy there."

"Oh! Cheesy says anything," replied Bantam, "except when his mother's by—then he sings small."

A roar of laughter followed this little jest, and Cheesy looked very savage at Bantam, who, having had his cut at him, serenely ignored him.

"Jim!" said Bantam, "I've brought some young gents with me—real good sorts, most of 'em—plucky and up to anything—perfect pictures of health and beauty."

"Perfect pictures," echoed Tickler, "'cept the one as blubbered in the boat."

This was Jerry Snivel, whose eyes were still red with weeping, and he was looking around at the assemblage of rough men with a look full of terror.

Jim interpreted the look, and relieved him.

"You needn't be afeerd, youngster," he said; "we are all men here, and them as forget themselves is soon put right. Now, Bantam, it's time for you and Tickler to have a go in."

"Afore we does it," said Bantam, "we'd like to have little show with two of our poopils. I'll have a set to with Master Fitzroy, and Tickler with Master Crusher, both uncommon smart youngsters."

Jim was on his platform in a moment, ready enough with this speech this time.

"Gentlemen," he said, "afore you have the Bantam and Tickler, each will set-to with a poopil—sons of the nobility."

A roar of delight followed this announcement, and Harry and Bantam stepped upon the platform, Jim Crippler offering his services to Harry to hold his upper garments.

"Afore we begin," said the Bantam, addressing the audience, "I wish to tell you that my poopil have only had two lessons, but he took 'em in like mother's milk, and you'll say he is a wonder."

Harry was tall for his age, but he was not to be compared to the giant before him. Of course it was an unfair match, and had the Bantam chosen, he could have annihilated him right off; but he acted almost entirely on the defensive, and when he did give a blow, it was beautiful to see how light and feathery was the giant's touch.

Harry sparred well—wonderfully well, and once he succeeded in tapping the Bantam's nose, a success received by the lookers on with unbounded delight.

"He's a good 'un," said Jim, appealing to the crowd; "ain't he, now?"

"He's a downright stunner," replied a man in a white hat.

The first round over, and Harry paused for breath, resting on Jim's knee.

Just then a little commotion was heard at the

door, and the voice of the doorkeeper was heard informing somebody that he "couldn't come in."

"But I must and will come in," replied another voice. "In the name of the law, I demands it."

"Why, it's Chops," said Harry, with a smile. "What fun?"

"If he's a friend o' yourn," said Jim, "he can come in, of course."

"He's no friend; only a sort of private bobby at our school. Let him come in, but if he doesn't behave himself, turn him out."

"That's soon done," replied Jim, as he made a signal to the doorkeeper, and Chops was allowed to pass.

Chops had been moistening the law on his way with sundry liquors, and these coming on the top of what he had taken during the day, raised him into his most dignified state. His hat was almost flat, his coat was unbuttoned half way, but he was fully alive to the power he wielded, and came down the lane the people made for him with resolution in his eye.

He caught sight of Harry, and, advancing to the platform, essayed to mount it. The Tickler jerked his coat-tails, and he went back flop into his seat.

"Here," he said, "you come home—the lot of yer. I watched your little game; the eye of the law was on yer, and the ear of the law 'eard where you was comin' to. When you got into the boat you didn't know the man as was a goin' to follow you. Come 'ome, I say."

"Who is he?" asked Jim.

"He's a harmless lunatic," replied Harry, "that we keep on board out of kindness. I see he is rather spiteful to-night. Lock him up until the fun is over, and then we will take him home."

"All right, sir," said Jim. "Now, old man, come along."

"Don't you lay your hand on the law," said Chops, "you don't know who I am."

"Yes, I does," replied Jim, good-naturedly. "Here, let us go for a walk."

He took Chops by the arm, and firmly forced him back a step or two.

This was an indignity Chops could not brook just then, and his right hand found its way into his pocket.

"If I can only find the symbolical of my authority," he said, "you'll soon know the man you're shoving about. Ha! here it is. Now, hands off!"

"What—wicious, are yer?" said Jim; and, with the rapidity of lightning, he got Chops' head in chancery, and seized him by the wrist.

"Don't hurt him," said Harry.

"No, I won't sir," replied Jim; "but I must pnt him somewhere. Dick, are there any dawgs in the wood-cellar?"

"Yes, old Tiger."

"Ha! he'll do."

"Murder!" gasped Chops—"murder! Mind, if you set a dog on me—"

"Oh, it's all right," said Jim. "Now, Dick, bear a hand."

Dick came down, and between them Chops was got out of the room. He expostulated violently all the way, and threatened them with every punishment ever inflicted upon the breakers of the law, but his words fell on adder ears, and they took him across the yard to the wood-cellar.

A lantern was hanging from the roof, and by its light Chops could see a most ferocious-looking bull-dog, with a prominent under jaw displaying a set of teeth that made his blood curdle. As Chops was put down on his feet this lovely specimen of the canine species sniffed suspiciously at his legs.

"Now," said Jim, "all you've got to do is to sit on that barrer, and keep quiet. Here's your bit o' stick which you seem to be so fond on, and I should advise you to put it into your pocket, 'cause Tiger is apt to take offense at people as looks wicious. Now, Tiger, watch him, and if he gets out of that barrer, have him down."

"Don't leave me here," pleaded Chops; "it's barbarity—it's murder."

"You are all right so long as you keep quiet," said Jim, coolly.

"Here's a outrage," gasped Chops, sinking on to the barrow—"here's a collaps of the institutions of old England, when inspectors are shoved into barrers, and bull-dogs set to watch over them."

Jim and his man returned to the sparring-room, and Jim told Harry what had been done, adding that Tiger wouldn't hurt him no way, but he knew his business, and would keep him safe.

The sparring was then continued, and David

Crusher had a go in with the Tickler, which gained him some applause; then he and Harry had a merry mill, and their blood getting up a bit they went at it rather stiffly, until David was knocked down clear off the platform, and then the Bantam stepped in.

"No more," he said. "You've had a friendly bout, and that's enough."

Gerard Warren and Ned Bunting had a little slogging, and afterwards some more professionals obliged the company with an exhibition of what they could do, and the entertainment concluded with some exceedingly well-known professors.

"Now, boys," said Harry, looking at his watch, "I think it's time to go."

"Well, good-night, gentlemen," said Jim Crippler. "It's proud I am of the honor you've done me this night, and it's prouder I should be if you'd come here again. You can make as free of the Nobbly Arms as you like."

They thanked him, and putting on their overcoats to hide their sailor's dress, they went into the yard, where Jim pointed to the shed, and asked if Chops was to be released.

"After we are gone—in ten minutes," replied Harry. "He will come on board all right."

They hurried down to the beach, where the boat was lying in waiting, and launching her they pulled back to the *Heart of Oak*. All seemed to be quiet, and they crept softly up, Harry foremost. As he touched the deck a light flashed in his face, and Captain Timber stood before him.

"Stand!" cried the old man. "Who is it?"

"Harry Fitzroy, sir."

"All right, my lad. Who's next?"

They all came up one by one, and reported themselves. When all were on deck he asked for Chops.

"He's coming, sir," replied Harry.

"Then you've seen him?"

"Yes, sir, and he's ordered us all on board."

This was quite true as far as the ordering went, but the captain, from the words of Harry, inferred that they had returned in obedience to the command of Chops.

"I'm glad you've come," he said, "for disobedience to orders can't be endured. I sent him to you, and you've come at once. You've wiped out half your offense, but you must be punished in the morning. Go down, and I'll think over what to do."

The boys went down, and Captain Timber was left alone with the Bantam and Tickler. He threw the light on their faces and glared indignantly at them. He might as well have frowned at Stonehenge.

"You are a pretty pair, ain't you?" he said.

"You keep order and discipline."

"We ain't done nothing else," replied the Bantam.

"In course we ain't," added the Tickler.

"Why—why—what!" exclaimed the captain.

"Ain't you broke the laws—ain't you been and gone—"

"No we ain't," said the Bantam.

"Who says we has?" asked the Tickler.

"I'll let you know what you've done," growled the captain. "You've broken the articles; as sure as my name's Timber you'll have a dozen lashes in the morning."

"Look 'ere," said the Bantam. "Just listen to

me, cap'n, for it's words o' warning I'm goin' to give you. Don't you nor any other man aboard here lay a finger on me."

"Or on me," growled the Tickler.

"Nor on the boys either," added the Bantam.

"Not one on 'em," added the Tickler.

"They ain't done nothin'," said the Bantam, "and we ain't done nothin'; and if we had we ain't a-goin' to have any nigger slave tricks aboard this 'ere ship. I should like to see a man as offered to give me a dozen."

"Or me," said the Tickler.

"You pair of scoundrels!" cried the captain, "what do you mean by this mutiny? You leave the ship to-morrow."

"Can't," said the Bantam.

"Sha'n't," said the Tickler; "we were engaged for six months."

"You can have your pay and go," returned Captain Timber.

"Blow the pay," said the Bantam; "we don't want it till we've earned it, and then we means to stop. We've taken a liking to the boys, and they've taken a liking to us, and so there's an end on it. Good-night, cap'n."

"Good-night," said the Tickler.

"Well, of all the—why, dash it," exclaimed the captain, when they were gone, "this is worse and worse. Everybody aboard here's master except me. Can't—and sha'n't—confound 'em a bit. There's more in Chops than I thought. Ah, my lads! we'll hear what you have to say when he comes back. What the deuce is he doing?"

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